



Islamabad POST

Friday, November 28, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Russian ambassador says cultural ties with Pak cemented

Detailed News On Page-08

Govt to fulfill IMF conditions, says Aurangzeb

Detailed News On Page-01



Pakistan values relations with UAE: Gilani

Detailed News On Page-08



Pakistan-GCC free trade accord in final stages: PM Shehbaz

Islamabad ready to enhance economic cooperation with Manama in fields including AI, IT and agriculture

DNA

MANAMA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the Gulf Cooperation Council Free Trade Agreement (GCC FTA) has been "nearly finalised" and is expected to be signed soon, adding that the pact would significantly boost Pakistan's trade with GCC member states, particularly Bahrain. The premier made these remarks while addressing the business community in Manama, a day after arriving in the Bahraini capital, where he held delegation-level talks with the country's leadership at Al Qudaiya Palace.

Addressing the gathering, the prime minister said the agreement would open new avenues for economic cooperation, investment and market access. He urged Bahraini investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan's industry, agriculture, IT and fintech sectors. "This will enhance trade between Pakistan and the GCC countries, particularly with Bahrain," he said, inviting Bahraini businesses to form partnerships with Pakistani firms.

"I address you not just as the Prime Minister of Pakistan but as the CEO of a nation eager to partner with Bahraini entrepreneurs ready to support joint ventures, facilitate your investment plans and assist in the mutually-rewarding journey ahead of us... Whether you are a Bahraini investor exploring Pakistan or a Pakistani entrepreneur contributing to Bahrain's

PM expresses solidarity after Hong Kong fire

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed condolences over the loss of life and property as a fire in a high-rise complex in Hong Kong killed over 40 people and left many others missing. "Deeply saddened by the tragic loss of precious lives and property in the devastating high-rise fire in Hong Kong. Our heartfelt condolences go out to H.E. President Xi Jinping and the Chinese nation, particularly the people of Hong Kong on this tragic incident," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline. He said that Pakistan stood in solidarity with the people and Government of China, especially the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, during this difficult time. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families, and we wish a speedy recovery to all those injured. May the affected families find strength and healing. Pakistan and China will always stand together," Prime Minister Shehbaz remarked. – DNA

great progress, let this moment be your launching pad for a bold and meaningful collaboration," he added. Expressing gratitude to King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa for their warm hospitality to him and his delegation, he said the relationship between the two countries was based on cultural, religious, mutual respect and trust, with both having strategic cooperation for decades. "Now we have to convert these wonderful relations into economic cooperation," he said, and vowed to convert Pakistan's challenge of youth bulge into a great opportunity by training them in IT, AI, vocational training, and skill training. The premier appreciated the Pakistani

community of over 100,000 in Bahrain for their contribution to the host country as well as their own homeland by sending their hard-earned remittances worth \$484 million last year. "Let me assure you that Pakistan's doors and my own door will always remain open to all of you," he assured and appreciated Bahrain's visionary leadership, making the country emerge as a "beacon" of economic growth, financial innovation and human-centred development, also serving as inspiration for Pakistan. Earlier, in his remarks, Bahrain's Finance Minister Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, said that the generations of Pakistanis had played a vital role in Bahrain's growth, with

Continued on Page 06

Rana Sanaullah blames 'past establishment' for destruction in Pakistan

Adviser to PM says consultations held with PPP regarding appointment of Sindh governor

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Senator Rana Sanaullah has held the establishment during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government responsible for the "destruction in Pakistan". "The PTI founder and those who brought him to power in 2018 are responsible for the destruction in Pakistan," he said while speaking to the media outside the Parliament House on Thursday. Sanaullah maintained that the chaos that occurred during the PTI government has not been undone "despite the incumbent government's great efforts". "The establishment of that time is responsible for all this ruin. General Faiz Hameed is currently on trial," he added. However, he said that holding those actors accountable was not the PML-N's priority right now. "Our current focus is stabilising the country."

The PML-N leader asserted that the government would complete its term with the support of its allies, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Responding to a question regarding a change in the Sindh governorship, Sanaullah said that they have held consultations with the PPP regarding the same. The PML-N-led government was currently addressing the PPP's reservations about a decision to bring a change in Sindh, he added. Sanaullah downplayed the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) recent report on Pakistan, saying: "The IMF report on corruption has no significance." He noted that no scandal of corruption surfaced in the current government or the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government.

His comments come hours after Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb pledged the government would address all gaps and issues identified in the IMF report.

NATIONAL DAY OF ROMANIA



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi, Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi, Ambassador of Romania Dan Stoenescu and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Romania. – DNA

Romanian envoy talks about ever-expanding relations with Pakistan

Ambassador Stoenescu shared that Romania has significantly expanded its presence in Pakistan over the past year

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Romania's Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Dan Stoenescu, delivered an inspiring address on the occasion of Romania's National Day, celebrated on 1 December, emphasizing unity, resilience, and the deepening partnership between Romania and Pakistan. Speaking to a distinguished gathering of diplomats, officials, academia, and members of civil society, the ambassador said that Romania's National Day marks "the Great Union of 1918"—a defining moment when all Romanian provinces united to form a modern and sovereign state. He said the day serves as a reminder of national unity, shared values, and the country's unwavering commitment to freedom, security and prosperity.

Highlighting this year's milestone, the ambassador noted that Romania and Pakistan are celebrating 61 years of diplomatic relations, built on friendship, mutual respect, and consistent cooperation. Ambassador Stoenescu shared that Romania has significantly expanded its presence in Pakistan over the past year. The opening of the Romanian Honorary Consulate in Peshawar, and upcoming honorary consulates in Karachi and Lahore, reflect Romania's strategic focus on strengthening bilateral engagement. He said his extensive travels across Pakistan—including Karachi, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Peshawar—have helped open new avenues for trade, investment and business dialogue.

A major highlight of the year was the successful launch of the first Romania-Pakistan IT Forum, bringing over 100 tech companies from both

countries into direct contact. The envoy termed it a "historic step" toward building partnerships in technology, innovation and digital transformation. The Romanian ambassador underscored a notable momentum in bilateral defence ties, citing high-level military exchanges that have reinforced the "trusted partnership" between the two armed forces. Cultural and educational collaboration has also grown substantially. The first edition of the Romanian Cultural Days in Pakistan—featuring film screenings, art exhibitions and music performances—drew strong public interest in Islamabad and Karachi. Academic partnerships with institutions such as NUST, GIFT University and NUTECH continue to expand. The ambassador proudly announced the opening of

Continued on Page 06

Pak to resolve IMF-identified gaps: FinMin

IMF says political and economic elites have obstructed economic development

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb has said Pakistan will address all gaps identified in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) report and take steps to resolve the issues highlighted. He added: "God willing, an agreement with the IMF will be reached."

Continued on Page 06

Attack near White House

US govt stops processing Afghan immigration requests

Washington shooting leaves two Guardsmen critical, with White House placed under lockdown

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US Citizenship and Immigration Services said late on Wednesday it has stopped processing all immigration requests relating to Afghan nationals indefinitely, after two National Guard soldiers were shot and critically wounded in Washington. President Donald Trump said that the shooting near the White House was "an act of terror," saying the suspect came from Afghanistan in 2021. The move follows Trump's call for his government to re-examine Afghan immigrants who entered the United States when Joe Biden was President. "The protection and safety of our homeland and of the American people remains our singular focus and mission," the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services said in a post on X. The National Guard soldiers were shot earlier on Wednesday in what officials described as a targeted ambush, and the suspect was in custody after suffering gunshot wounds during the attack. Investigators identified the suspect as Rahmanullah Lakanwal, a 29-year-old Afghan national from Washington State, according to a Justice Department official who

spoke on condition of anonymity. The attack is being investigated as an act of terrorism, the official said. Trump is at his resort in Palm Beach ahead of Thursday's Thanksgiving holiday, while US Vice President JD Vance is in Kentucky. In a social media post, Trump called the suspected shooter an "animal" who was also "severely wounded." He also ordered 500 more guard soldiers deployed to Washington, Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth told reporters, joining about 2,200 already in the city as part of the president's contentious immigration and crime crackdown targeting Democratic-led cities. Lakanwal came to the US in 2021 on a special visa programme for Afghans who assisted the US during the Afghanistan war and were vulnerable to reprisals from the ruling Taliban after the US withdrawal, the official said. But he overstayed his visa and is in the country illegally, according to the official. President Donald Trump was in Florida at the time of the attack, which prompted the White House to go into lockdown as law enforcement from multiple federal and city agencies swarmed the area.

Continued on Page 06

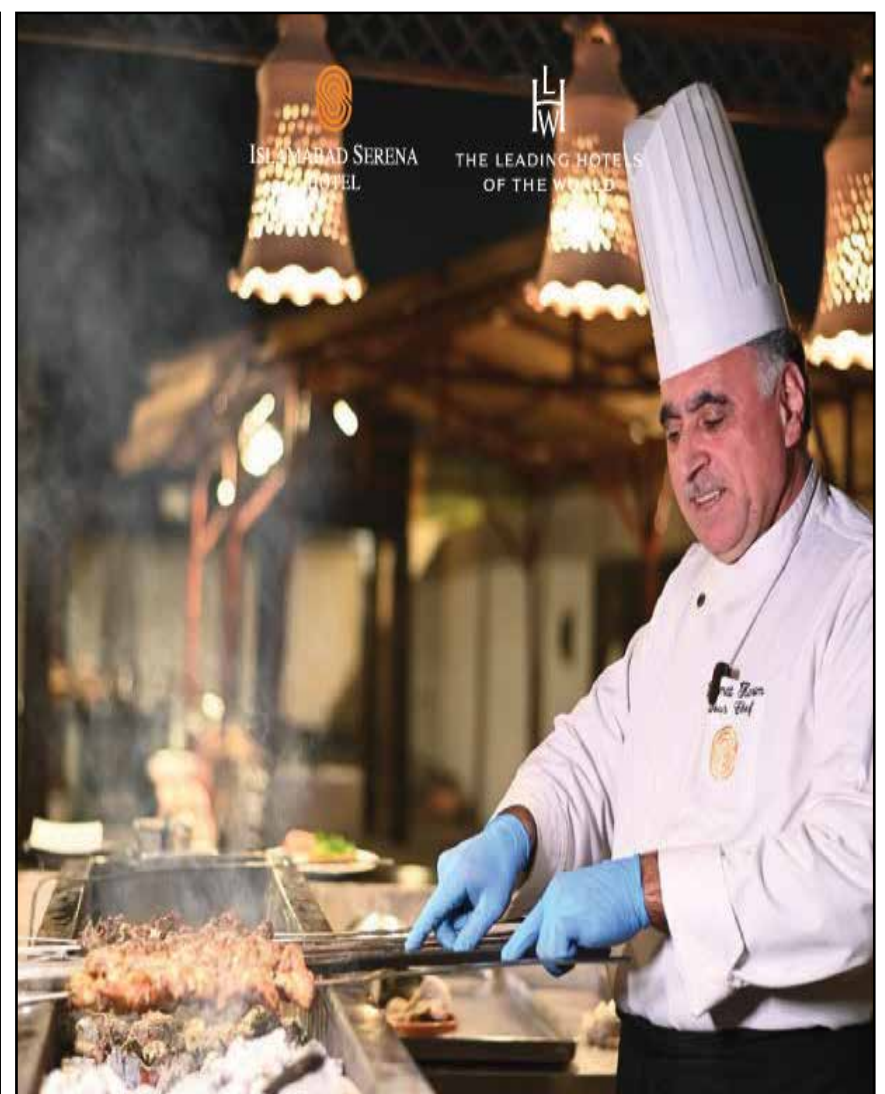
Briefs

CM Afridi says weighing 'last option'



DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Thursday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was discussing its "last option" to secure a meeting with jailed party founder Imran Khan, amid rumours about his health. The Adiala jail administration issued an update on the former premier a day earlier, following speculation about his health and relocation from the facility. However, speaking to the media at Rawalpindi's Gorkhpur checkpoint today, the KP chief minister said that the party's concerns were growing over the refusal to allow a meeting with the PTI founder. He added that the party was left with its "last option" after "adopting all legal and democratic courses" to ensure a meeting with Khan inside the prison. "We want a one-on-one meeting with PTI founder to inquire about his health," the CM said. CM Afridi maintained that he wanted to join the earlier sit-in outside the prison; however, the PTI founder's sisters stopped him from doing so. Khan, who has been incarcerated since August 2023, faces a plethora of cases, including corruption and terrorism, since his ouster from power via the opposition's no-trust motion in April 2022. The Adiala jail administration, in its clarification, said that there was no truth to reports about the PTI founder's transfer from the facility.



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Salman for advancing medical edu through varsities

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has said that the provincial government is actively promoting medical education through medical universities across Punjab.

He expressed this commitment while chairing the 41st syndicate meeting of Fatima Jinnah Medical University (FJMU) on Thursday. The minister stated that medical education in Punjab's institutions is being strengthened in line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, who is striving to provide the best healthcare facilities to the people. During the meeting, the University Registrar presented the agenda items, and the syndicate approved the minutes of its 40th meeting. The meeting also approved the adoption of a central indication policy for MCPS and endorsed the curriculum for MS Spine Surgery in Neurosurgery/Orthopedics at Level 4. In addition, the level of the MD Preventive Pediatrics specialty was upgraded to Level 4. The syndicate also allowed the adoption of SOPs formulated by the Higher Education Commission for the appointment of Professor Emeritus at FJMU. The minutes of the Campus Committee and affiliated institutions were approved, and the extension of the Associate Professor of Neurosurgery was granted. The meeting also approved the extension of contracts for employees of the university and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Lahore, as well as the upgrade of the Computer Operator post to Junior Computer Operator. Similarly, the extension of contracts for employees of the Punjab Thalassaemia and Genetic Diseases Program was allowed. Various financial and planning agendas recommended by the 47th and 48th meetings of Finance and Planning were also approved.—APP

Pakistan ranks high in diabetes prevalence

ISLAMABAD, Nov 27 (AP-P):The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), in collaboration with the Islamabad Founder Lions Club on Thursday organized an impactful awareness session in connection with World Diabetes.

The session drew significant participation from members of the business community, educationists, medical professionals, and university students, reflecting the importance of addressing diabetes as a growing national health concern. A distinguished panel comprising Dr. Shagufta Feroz, Dr. Arif Masood, District Governor, Lions Club International, Dr. Zubair Hassan, Dr. Munira Abbasi, Professor Dr. Tahira Sadiq, and Yasir Akbar Niazi briefed the audience on the alarming rise of diabetes in Pakistan. They highlighted that, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), nearly one in three adults in Pakistan is currently affected by diabetes, making the country the world's highest in adult prevalence of the disease. The experts emphasized the need for preventive measures, stressing reduced intake of junk food and sugary drinks, timely screening, and the adoption of a balanced and active lifestyle as key steps to combating the silent killer.—APP

Pakistan attaches great value to its ties with UAE: Gilani

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that Pakistan attaches great value to its brotherly relations with the United Arab Emirates, which are deeply rooted in shared faith, cultural affinity, and decades of close cooperation at the political, economic, social, and parliamentary levels. He expressed these views during a meeting with the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan, Salem Mohammad Salem AlBawab Alzaabi, here on Thursday. The meeting was marked by warmth, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to further deepening the longstanding brotherly ties between Pakistan and the UAE. Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani extended heartfelt greetings and conveyed his best wishes to the leadership and the brotherly people of the UAE. The chairman Senate expressed deep appreciation for the Ambassador's gracious presence and valuable participation in the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC). He noted that the UAE's active engagement added significant value to the proceedings and reflected its strong commitment to inter-parliamentary collaboration and regional solidarity. The chair-

man highlighted the ISC as a forward-looking platform that brings together parliamentary leaders to collectively address global challenges. He also appreciated the increasing momentum in bilateral engagements in recent years, terming it a reflection of the visionary leadership of both countries. He noted that recent high-level visits including the visit of His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in April 2025 and the maiden visit of His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, had further strengthened the foundation of Pakistan-UAE friendship. Syed Yousuf Gilani added that Pakistan is eagerly looking forward to the upcoming visit of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi.

The chairman Senate expressed satisfaction over the steady growth in bilateral trade, which reached US\$10.1 billion in 2025. He emphasized Pakistan's desire to expand economic cooperation, attract Emirati investment, and explore new avenues in trade, energy, technology, tourism, and infrastructure development. The UAE Ambassador acknowledged Pakistan's potential as a key economic partner

and expressed the UAE's readiness to enhance bilateral trade and investment ties. Highlighting the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, the chairman Senate welcomed ongoing initiatives such as the Pakistan-UAE Friendship Group in the Senate. He proposed joint research programs between parliamentary committees of both countries and suggested hosting bilateral virtual seminars on regional security, renewable energy, and educational exchanges to promote shared learning and deepen cooperation.

During the meeting, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani underscored that the core issue of Kashmir between Pakistan and India remains unresolved. He emphasized that lasting peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved until the Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The chairman warned that the failure to address this longstanding dispute poses a serious threat to regional security, and urged the international community to play its due role in supporting a



just, peaceful, and durable settlement.

He further underscored Pakistan's unwavering commitment to regional peace

and stability, noting that Pakistan is a peace-loving nation and has always acted in self-defense against aggression or false propaganda.

The chairman expressed deep concern over external interference in Pakistan's internal affairs, particularly terrorist activities in Ba-

lochistan, and stressed the importance of all countries adhering to international agreements, including the Indus Waters Treaty.—DNA

Meeting discuss protection of KP children from intestinal worms

PESHAWAR : Special Secretary Health, Khalid Parvez on Thursday chaired a meeting of Multi-Sectoral Steering Committee to discuss protection of children from intestinal (stomach) worms in KP. Meeting was attended by senior officials of health department and other relevant departments. The meeting was informed that under the ongoing De-worming Program in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, approximately 18 million children have been provided with free, safe and effective medicines from 2019 to date. The upcoming campaign would be conducted from 8 December to 12 December during which around 8 million more children across the province would be administered medicine to eliminate intestinal worms.

It was told that under this campaign, a target has been set to protect over 8 million children aged 5 to 14 years in 22 districts of KP from intestinal worms. This target includes children from all public and private schools, primary and middle educational institutions and madaris. To ensure the success of the campaign, more than 35,000 teachers, health department staff, Lady Health Workers and other supporting personnel are deployed every year. Teachers are provided special training and assigned the responsibility of administering the medicine and creating awareness at educational institutions, while the health department ensures technical supervision, availability of medicines and monitoring. Offi-

cials stated that intestinal worms negatively affect children's health, physical growth, nutrition and academic performance. Due to De-worming Program, a significant reduction in anemia, weakness, and other diseases among children has been observed, meeting was told. According to health department, strict implementation of all safety protocols would be ensured during the campaign and children would be provided with safe and effective medicines in accordance with international standards. Meeting also urged parents, teachers, religious scholars and all segments of society to fully cooperate in this national welfare initiative so that the children of the province may move towards a healthy and secure future.—APP

Rs 6m spent on police employees, martyrs families

KHANEWAL: District Police Officer (DPO) Ismail Kharak has accelerated a wide range of welfare initiatives for police personnel and their families utilizing well over Rs 6 million to support serving and retired employees, as well as families of police martyrs. The welfare measures included disbursement of financial assistance cheques, medical support for officers and their dependents, improved housing facilities, enhancement of duty points, and the upgradation of police messes and barracks. Police spokesman said in a statement that during the current year, a police driver, constable Munir Baqar, underwent a leg implant surgery funded under the welfare programme. Additionally, the roof of a retired Class-IV employee's house was constructed, while medical assistance was provided to ASI Tahir Hussain, whose leg was amputated due to diabetes. Constable Muhammad Fazal received support for treatment of blood cancer. In another significant step, registration process of plots for 14 police martyrs was completed, ensuring long-term security for their families. Welfare assistance was also extended to officers affected by floods, while educational support initiatives were launched to help the children of police employees. DPO Ismail Kharak emphasized that the welfare of police personnel remains the department's top priority. "Police welfare is not just a policy—it is a continuous mission that we are pursuing with complete dedication," he said. He added that, under the directions of the provincial government and IG Punjab, facilities at police lines and police stations have been upgraded along modern standards.—APP

Slow internet hampering digital economy targets

LAHORE: Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol said on Thursday that the quality of internet service in Pakistan has declined sharply in recent years, while the world is rapidly advancing in IT and technology. He said Pakistan is falling behind in the race for innovation, even though freelancing and the digital economy offer major opportunities for the country. He was holding a meeting with delegation of IT professionals here at the LCCI. Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, Executive Committee Members Firdous Nisar and Syed Salman Ali were also present. The delegation was led by Atif Mahmood Tahir with its members Tayyab Manzoor, Atif Ja-

vaid, Aizazi Nawaz, Ali Murtaza, Arsalan Gul, Gul Raina and Zoha Liaquat. Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol said that Lahore Chamber has been working for a long time to improve internet, IT services and the freelancing sector, because technology is now the fastest-growing field for attracting foreign investment. He said if connectivity does not improve, Pakistan's IT exports, freelancing income, and startup culture will suffer. CEO Multinet Atif Mahmood said that Pakistan's tech market has now reached nearly USD 20 billion, and if infrastructure is improved, it has the potential to grow to USD 60 billion. He said this growth is only possible if Pakistan makes serious efforts to ensure fast,

stable and modern internet services. Atif Mahmood Tahir said that in the past five years no major work has been done on Pakistan's internet infrastructure. He said freelancing, the digital economy and startup culture are growing fast, but Pakistan's internet system is unable to meet their needs. Due to lack of fiber networks and data centers, Pakistan has fallen behind other countries in the region. He said that if the government focuses on the technology sector, speeds up the development of special tech zones, and upgrades internet services to international standards, Pakistan's digital economy can grow many times over and create significant job opportunities for young people.—APP

Kundi highlights PPP's commitment to upholding democratic values

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has said that the supremacy of the Constitution, freedom of expression and the provision of justice were the core visions of Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was committed to fulfilling that mission. He expressed these views while speaking to a delegation of the Peoples Lawyers Forum (PLF) Mardan at Governor's House on Thursday. The delegation, led by PLF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leader and Deputy Attorney General Gohar Rehman Khattak, PLF provincial president Mehm Afridi, general secretary Lajbar Khan Khalil and PLF Mardan divisional president Mushtaq Bacha. Governor Kundi said that the role of the Pakistan Peoples Party and the legal community in restoring and strengthening democracy in the country was undeniable. He added that the recent success of PLF-backed candidates in various bar council elections reflected the lawyers' confidence in the PPP's manifesto and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's leadership. On the occasion, Barrister Babar Shehzad Imran, Barrister Mustafa, Advocate Kausar Ali Shah and Advocate Imran Khan announced their decision to join the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Peoples Lawyers Forum. The Governor welcomed the new members and praised the provincial and local PLF leadership for their efforts. He emphasized that the doors of the Governor House were always open to party workers and the public, and that he was striving to fulfill the trust placed in him by the party. He added that the Governor House was the party's forum and remained accessible at all times. Governor Kundi further said that the future of the Pakistan Peoples Party was bright, and despite the challenges facing democratic forces today, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari continued to advance his mission with full resolve.—DNA

ICT admin collaborate to transform Islamabad into smart city

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held on Thursday at the CDA Headquarters, chaired by Chief Commissioner Islamabad and Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa, regarding a modern traffic management system and digital parking to transform the Federal Capital, Islamabad, into a smart city. The meeting was attended by IG Islamabad Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, CDA Board Member Admin Talat Mehmood, Member Planning and Design Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Member Finance Tahir Naem, senior officers from Islamabad Police, Chief Officer of MCI, as well as senior officials from the CDA and the Excise and Taxation Islamabad. During the briefing given to the meeting, it was informed that in line with the direction of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the process of installing MTags on vehicles throughout the city is progressing rapidly. The meeting was informed that, so far, over 35,000 vehicles in

the Federal Capital, Islamabad, have been fitted with MTags. The meeting was informed that, keeping in view the convenience of citizens, 10 points have been established at various locations across the city, and the number of

MTag counters is being continuously increased for further ease of the public. Similarly, for effective vehicle monitoring, the MTag system will also be integrated with the Islamabad Safe City Project. Chairman CDA Muhammad

Ali Randhawa said that modern technology and artificial intelligence will be used to resolve digital parking and traffic issues in Islamabad. He said that digital parking facilities in the City will also be made available to citizens through a modern mobile application. IG Islamabad Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that various measures are being taken to transform Islamabad from a safe city into a smart city. He mentioned that work on the e-challan system under the Islamabad Safe City Project is also being expedited. Chairman CDA said that as a result of these measures, Islamabad will be transformed into a state-of-the-art digital and smart City. He said that controlling traffic and parking issues will save citizens both time and fuel. Chairman CDA further said that the purpose of these measures is to ensure the provision of modern traffic systems and the best parking facilities to the citizens.—DNA



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria
National Day

Nov 04/Italy
Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation
Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia
National Day

Nov 11/Poland
Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan
Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium
Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil
Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
National Day

Nov 18/Oman
National Day

Nov 18/Morocco
Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh
Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon
Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname
National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania
National Day

Nov 28/Albania
Flags Day

‘Indonesian Corner’ opened at National Library of Pakistan

Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khichi, in his remarks appreciated the Government of Indonesia and the National Library of Indonesia for establishing the Indonesian Corner

ANSAR M. BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: As part of the celebrations marking 75 years of Indonesia-Pakistan diplomatic relations, the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan inaugurated a dedicated Indonesian Corner at the National Library of Pakistan (NLP) in Islamabad on Wednesday. The event was attended by diplomats, government officials, academics, students, and members of the cultural and literary community. Located on the 2nd floor of the National Library, the Indonesian Corner is designed to promote Indonesian culture, language, literature, and educational resources. The collection includes books, cultural materials, and multimedia resources curated to provide Pakistani readers, scholars and students deeper insight into Indonesia's history, society, and traditions. Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khichi, in his remarks, invited other ASEAN missions in Pakistan to utilize the National Library's space for setting up their own cultural corners. He ap-



preciated the Government of Indonesia and the National Library of Indonesia for establishing the Indonesian Corner, noting that it would “quench the literary thirst of book lovers, especially those eager to learn more about Indonesia, its culture, and its people.” Speaking at the ceremony, Indonesian Ambassador H.E. Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo highlighted that cultural diplomacy remains a key pillar of Indonesia-Pakistan ties. He said the Indonesian Corner would serve as a cultural and educational bridge between the two nations, fostering cooperation in education, research, arts, and people-to-people exchanges. He also welcomed the signing of an MoU between the national libraries of both countries, calling it an encouraging step toward deeper collaboration. Dr. Joko Santoso, Secretary of the National Library of Indonesia, who travelled from Jakarta to attend the inauguration, announced that Indonesia would donate around 1,000 books to enrich the Indonesian Corner at the NLP. Dr. Santoso emphasized Indonesia's national com-



mitment to ensuring public access to knowledge. He outlined the vast and diverse collections of the National Library of Indonesia—one of the richest in South-east Asia—including Nusantara manuscripts, palm-leaf and bamboo texts, rare books, colonial-era prints, and modern academic and literary works. He also highlighted the library's mandate to provide safe, inclusive, and standardized information services, supported by nationwide programs such as mobile libraries, motorcycle-based outreach services, and book donations to village libraries across all 38 provinces. Drawing parallels between Indonesia and Pakistan, Dr. Santoso noted that both nations share common goals in literacy promotion, cultural preservation, and strengthening public knowledge. “This agreement is not merely an administrative document—it is a commitment to learn from each other, exchange experiences, and support one another in advancing the role of libraries in national development,” he said.

He expressed deep appreciation to the National Library of Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan, and the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad for their support. “As we commemorate 75 years of Indonesia-Pakistan friendship, may this partnership grow stronger,” he said. “Knowledge is a bridge—and today, we strengthen that bridge together.”

The Director General of the National Library praised the initiative, stating that the Indonesian Corner would significantly enhance the library's international resources and promote academic and cultural cooperation between the two countries. The ceremony concluded with a guided tour of the newly established corner, followed by interactions between Indonesian diplomats, library officials, and invited guests. This initiative builds upon the earlier establishment of a similar Indonesian Corner at the National Book Foundation (NBF), further expanding Indonesia's cultural presence in Pakistan. With two major cultural spaces now operational in Islamabad, Indonesia continues to deepen its engagement with Pakistani readers, researchers, and cultural institutions.

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.....555489

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

Mohtasib takes notice of large number of complaints against FGEHA

ISLAMABAD: Taking notice of a large number of complaints of the allottees, Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi deputed an inspection team to ascertain public grievances against the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA). Headed by the Senior Advisor, WMS, Ahmad Farooq, the inspection team interacted with the complainants to obtain firsthand knowledge of their problems.

People visiting the Authority's office complained of inordinate delays in completion of the various residential projects, mismanagement and costs run over. They complained that even after depositing millions

of rupees, people have to wait for decades to get allotment of plots. The Inspection Team directed that immediate measures be undertaken to address the persistent issue of delays, said a press release. The team instructed the Authority to give timeline of completion of all residential projects being executed by it and to upload the progress report on its website every month. It further instructed the Authority that the survivors of the deceased allottees of Sectors F-14 and F-15 be given a grace period of 03 months to deposit the next installment of dues. Later, the Director General, FGEHA, in a briefing assured the team

that the unsuccessful allottees of Sectors F-14 and F-15 would be accommodated in other sectors. The Inspection Team was further informed that work will commence on all residential projects from March 2026 and the allottees of Green Enclave-II would be given possession of their plots latest by December 2027. It was also informed that 70 percent work on the Lifestyle Apartments in Sector G-13 has been completed and the Authority's Board has approved the proposal to give relaxation in the price after selling the commercial plots and efforts are underway to complete the remaining work on the apartments by March 2026.APP

Building resilience in education through advancing DRSI

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: UN-Habitat hosted a high-level gathering to highlight progress made in advancing disaster-resilient school infrastructure and to present the achievements of the Disaster Resilient School Infrastructure (DRSI) Project. This marks an important milestone in efforts to create safer and more resilient learning environments for children in Pakistan's disaster-prone regions. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has long been one of Pakistan's most affected provinces, facing repeated earthquakes, floods, and climate-induced hazards that have severely damaged school infrastructure. Many buildings constructed before the introduction of Pakistan's 2007 Building Code remained vulnerable due to the absence of seismic provisions. To respond to these challenges, the DRSI Project was initiated by UN-Habitat to improve the structural safety of schools through retrofitting, repair, and the upgrading of essential facilities. This project was funded with 471 million Japanese Yen by the Government of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and jointly

implemented by UN-Habitat and UNDP in close coordination with the Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, the initiative strengthened 150 schools across eight districts. The project improved the learning environment for 31,000 students, including 13,595 girls, and rehabilitated 300 gender-responsive WASH facilities, including facilities in 66 girls' schools. Speaking at the event, Mr. Jawed Ali Khan, Senior Advisor and Programme Manager at UN-Habitat, emphasized UN-Habitat's leadership in delivering safer school environments. He noted that the retrofitted schools now provide structurally stable classrooms, improved ventilation and lighting, and essential WASH services that allow children to learn with confidence and security. JICA's Chief Representative, Mr. Naoki Miyata, said this project would contribute to enhance resilience of primary, middle and high school buildings in disaster prone areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 8 districts, Buner, Swat, Malakand, Peshawar, Chitral Upper & Lower and Dhir Upper and Lower. The Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi appreciated the collaborative effort and reaffirmed Japan's support to

Pakistan's resilience agenda. He said that strengthening school infrastructure is a vital investment in protecting children and ensuring that education continues even in the face of natural disasters. Mr. Hamid Mumtaz, Deputy Programme Manager at UN-Habitat, highlighted the urgent need to strengthen resilience in schools across disaster-prone regions. With two decades of experience in Pakistan, UN-Habitat has guided disaster risk reduction, safer reconstruction, national guidelines for earthquake- and flood-resistant construction, and multi-hazard risk assessments, contributing to safer and more resilient learning environments for children across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Secretary of the Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, expressed appreciation for the support of the Government of Japan, JICA, UN-Habitat, and UNDP noting that the project has strengthened school safety in districts previously hit hard by earthquakes and floods. He emphasized that continued collaboration is essential to ensure long-term resilience across the education sector. The improved school environments have strengthened trust within communities and encouraged regular attendance.

Islamabad reports 2 new dengue cases

ISLAMABAD: The district administration of Islamabad has stepped up its anti-dengue operations on Thursday to get control over the situation and move toward making the city dengue-free. Officials said the overall condition remains stable as district teams continue daily surveillance and field actions. A daily surveillance report issued by the district teams highlighted the measures taken during the past 24 hours. Under the ongoing anti-dengue operation, teams carried out fogging in 445 high-risk zones and sprayed 23 houses identified during monitoring activities. Teams also completed inspections at 23,260 locations across the city in a single day, marking a wide sweep of both

rural and urban localities. According to the report, Islamabad recorded only 2 new dengue cases in the past 24 hours—one case from rural areas and one from urban areas. Hospitals in the capital are currently treating 4 dengue patients, and doctors have described all of them as stable. Officials said there has been no alarming rise in cases, and hospital admissions remain limited. During larva checking activities, teams detected positive larva at 20 commercial hotspots, while all open areas were found clear. Only one negative larva case surfaced and was addressed on the spot by field staff. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Memon said the district teams' efficient actions, combined with public cooperation, have

helped keep dengue under control. He added that identifying larva in time has allowed teams to increase checking and surveillance in commercial areas, which are more prone to breeding activity. He noted that teams have been instructed to strengthen monitoring in these locations to prevent new cases from emerging. The administration has also taken strict action against individuals violating dengue SOPs, making arrests on the spot and initiating legal proceedings wherever required. DC Irfan Memon said the anti-dengue operation will continue without interruption until the city is fully cleared of the virus. Fogging and inspections will remain ongoing across Islamabad to ensure continuous monitoring and prevention.—APP

Pakistan, Lebanon pledge strategic digital media partnership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media Fahd Haroon today met the Ambassador of Lebanon to Pakistan, Mr. Abdulaziz Issa, in Islamabad on Thursday, November 27 to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in digital media and modern communication strategies. The high-level meeting also focused on sharing technical expertise and promoting regional media development. The engagement reflects Pakistan's broader initiative to cultivate international partnerships in digital governance, media capacity-building, and information exchange. In recent months, Pakistan has actively collaborated with countries across the Middle East to advance tech-driven communication, counter misinformation, and promote youth-focused digital initiatives. Fahd Haroon briefed the ambassador on Pakistan's ongoing digital transformation. He highlighted the government's focus on innovation, responsible online engagement, and modern media governance. He noted that Pakistan is rapidly adapting to global media trends and implementing reforms to ensure information flows efficiently, transparently, and in a citizen-centric manner. He further emphasized the modernization of Pakistan's communication infrastructure, with priorities including digital literacy, online safety, fact-based information access, and enhanced government-citizen connectivity. Recent initiatives have also promoted secure digital platforms and training programs to empower young media professionals. The Lebanese Ambassador commended Pakistan's proactive approach and shared that Lebanon is undertaking similar reforms to strengthen its communication systems amid regional challenges. He expressed interest in expanding cooperation in digital media, newsroom capacity-building, and content exchange, welcoming deeper bilateral technical engagement. Both sides stressed the importance of sustained dialogue in areas such as capacity-building, regulatory coordination, crisis communication, and digital diplomacy. They agreed to share best practices, explore joint workshops, and strengthen regional communication networks to address shared challenges effectively. The meeting concluded with a commitment to deepen collaboration. Pakistan and Lebanon aim to work together to support modern, effective, and secure digital media development across the region, emphasizing long-term institutional cooperation and people-to-people engagements.

FGP, CRS meeting explores collaborative avenues

ISLAMABAD :The senior leadership of Communication Research Strategies (CRS)—Aniq Zafar, Chief Executive Officer, and Khawar Azhar, Chief Operating Officer—met with the Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) team at its office on Thursday. The meeting focused on exploring collaborative avenues in strategic communication, evidence-based advocacy, climate-resilience messaging, and community-centered development outreach. FGP's CEO Muhammad Anwar, along with Shafat Aziz and Atif Saeed, welcomed the visiting CRS team. Both sides discussed shaping a future roadmap for impactful communication interventions, combining CRS's expertise in strategic media and narrative design with FGP's strength in policy advocacy and its strong development-sector network across Pakistan. The dialogue highlighted how integrated communication strategies can amplify climate-resilience awareness, strengthen community voices, and support inclusive socio-economic initiatives. FGP and CRS expressed a shared commitment to developing innovative, data-driven, and people-centered communication models that can meaningfully support vulnerable communities and contribute to national development goals.—APP

ANNOUNCEMENT

Affidavit for the Aqnama

I Muhammad Rashid son of Muhammad Alam 2- Mrs Shama Rashid wife of Muhammad Rashid resident of Mehta Jagir, Dakhkhana Khas, House No. 45, Mirpur, Pakistan, currently residing in the UK, and declares on oath the following matters. Man Mazhar An Halfa states that Man Mazhar's real son Anjum Rashid son of Muhammad Rashid resident of Mehta Jagir, Dakhkhana Khas, Mirpur, who is very disobedient and arrogant and has his own way. Man Mazhar does not listen to them. Man Mazharan tried hard but he did not reform himself. Now Man Mazhar An has given his real son Anjum Rashid son of Muhammad Rashid the inheritance share of Man Mazhar's assets till now.-/10,000 pounds by way of reward in the hands of the witness Qaiser Shuja, resident of Ehsan Road, Kala Gujran, Jhelum. After today, the said Anjum Rashid has no connection with our movable and immovable property and we, Man Mazhar, hereby disclaim all our movable and immovable property. Anjum Rashid is no longer entitled to any property of Man Mazhar after his life and death. And after today's date, Man Mazhar is not responsible for any of his words or actions. Man Mazhar has terminated all relations. Man Mazhar has written a statement of absolution in the name of Anjum Rashid in the presence of the witness Qaiser Shuja, resident of Ehsan Road, Kala Gujran, Jhelum, so that it is beautiful and can be used in times of need.

Deponent
Muhammad Rashid
son of Muhammad Alam
CNIC:(91400-0636535-7)

Deponent
Shama Rashid
wife of Muhammad Rashid
CNIC:(37301-4026520-4)

Briefs

**Pak-Kuwait
agrees to
extend coop
in petroleum
sector**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, held a meeting on Thursday with the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Pakistan, H.E. Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Almutairi, to discuss ongoing collaboration and future avenues of partnership between Pakistan and Kuwait, particularly in the petroleum sector. During the meeting, the Minister warmly welcomed the Ambassador and commended his positive and constructive role in strengthening Pakistan-Kuwait ties, referring to him as "a true friend of Pakistan." He highlighted that the relationship between both countries is rooted in mutual respect, trust, and decades-long cooperation, especially in energy and petroleum, said a press release. Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further deepening bilateral cooperation, noting that the petroleum partnership between the two nations has flourished over many decades. He emphasized the importance of expanding this collaboration in line with evolving global energy dynamics. *Ambassador Almutairi expressed his appreciation for the warm sentiments and noted that Pakistan is moving towards stability and progress, which Kuwait views positively.—APP

**Police come
under fire in
Golra raid**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police came under heavy fire in the Golra area when accomplices of a notorious drug peddler opened indiscriminate fire on a police raiding team. An official told APP on Thursday that the Golra police team was taking the arrested drug peddler, Adnan Haider, for the recovery of narcotics and arrest of his associates when the incident occurred. He said as soon as the police team approached a house where the accomplices were hiding, the suspects opened indiscriminate fire on the raiding team. He added that Constable Abdul Shakoar was hit in the chest, but remained unharmed due to timely safety measures and his bulletproof jacket. He said the under-custody drug peddler Adnan Haider, who was on physical remand, was injured by the firing of his own accomplices. Adnan Haider is a record-holder with dozens of narcotics cases registered against him.—APP

**Free skills
courses
under
PM Youth
Programme
began**

ISLAMABAD: The Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCT&VI) in Gwadar has opened admissions for Batch 3 of its free three-month skills courses under the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) and the Prime Minister Youth Programme. The latest courses — offered at no cost and open to applicants from middle to intermediate levels — include graphic design, web development, office management, e-commerce, Chinese and English language, and LTV driving. Applications are open online until Dec. 5, 2025, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. The initiative, run with Pak-China institutional support, aims to expand employment-oriented training in the CPEC-linked port city. PCT&VI has also started admissions for its 2025-26 diploma programmes, including three-year associate diplomas in IT, maritime and port management, e-commerce, robotics engineering and tourism, as well as one-year diplomas in languages, construction engineering and AI and data sciences. Shorter six-month technical courses such as crane operation, solar installation and mobile repair are also available. Tuition waivers and stipends are offered.—APP

SAPM for fast-tracking MoUs with Uzbekistan

He said while chairing a high-level meeting attended by Uzbekistan's Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev, Pakistan's Commercial Attaché in Tashkent Zaheer Abbas, and the President and delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI)

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Thursday called for fast-tracking the implementation of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and agreements reached between Pakistan and Uzbekistan to further strengthen bilateral economic cooperation. He said while chairing a high-level meeting attended by Uzbekistan's Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev, Pakistan's Commercial Attaché in Tashkent Zaheer Abbas, and the President and delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), said a news release. SAPM Haroon said that Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations are growing rapidly across multiple sectors. He

said that under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision, Pakistan is strengthening ties with Central Asian states. He added that the new National Industrial Policy and regulatory reforms aim to restore investor confidence. "Tourism holds tremendous potential, and Pakistan intends to deepen collaboration with Uzbekistan in this sector," he said. SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan also appreciated the RCCI for effectively leading delegations from various sectors. He instructed all stakeholders to ensure prompt follow-up on MoUs and agreements reached during the visit. "These agreements and joint initiatives must be operationalized to further strengthen bilateral cooperation,"

he emphasized. Uzbek Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev appreciated the delegation's visit and the growing interest in expanding economic ties. The RCCI delegation briefed SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan on its recent 150-member business visit to Uzbekistan. The delegation included representatives from health, pharmaceuticals, tourism, and the construction sector. RCCI President said that the key objective of the visit was to enhance bilateral trade and investment between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He shared that the delegation visited the Uzbek Pharma Park, Excellence Center, ICT Center, Technical University, and Business Center, expressing satisfaction over the facilities

provided there. The RCCI delegation noted that the Uzbek Pharma Park offers exemptions on land, property, and water taxes, in addition to zero customs duty on construction materials. "Pakistan should also establish similar pharma parks," the RCCI President emphasized. RCCI also highlighted the need to expand preferential trade agreements between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, terming it essential for deepened economic engagement. Multiple opportunities exist for cooperation in sectors including tourism and defence, the RCCI observed. The Chamber appreciated SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan's interest and support for the delegation's Uzbekistan visit.—DNA

Pak-Kuwait agrees to extend coop in petroleum sector



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, held a meeting on Thursday with the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Pakistan, H.E. Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Almutairi, to discuss ongoing collaboration and future avenues of partnership between Pakistan and Kuwait, particularly in the petroleum sector. During the meeting, the Minister warmly welcomed the Ambassador and commended his positive and constructive role in strengthening Pakistan-Kuwait ties, referring to him as "a true friend of Pakistan." He highlighted that the relationship between both countries is rooted in mutual respect, trust, and decades-long cooperation, especially in energy and petroleum, said a press release. Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik reaffirmed

Pakistan's commitment to further deepening bilateral cooperation, noting that the petroleum partnership between the two nations has flourished over many decades. He emphasized the importance of expanding this collaboration in line with evolving global energy dynamics. *Ambassador Almutairi expressed his appreciation for the warm sentiments and noted that Pakistan is moving towards stability and progress, which Kuwait views positively. He said that while Pakistan's development is evident, the enemies are envious of this progress and are attempting to derail this stability. He stressed that Kuwait stands firmly with Pakistan and wishes to see it prosper and advance on all fronts.* Both sides agreed to continue close coordination, explore new opportunities in the energy sector, and further strengthen the historic ties between Pakistan and Kuwait.

Voter trust, support for PML-N hits new heights

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Heritage and Culture, Huzaifa Rehman, said on Thursday that PML-N experienced a notable rise in voter trust compared to PTI and the public rejected the 'aggressive and hateful' narrative, as evidenced by the results of the recent by-elections. Talking to a Private news channel Huzaifa Rehman praised the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for its growing support in the recent by-elections. He emphasized that the rise in voter trust and confidence reflects the public's rejection of the divisive and hate-driven narratives often propagated by rival political parties, particularly the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Rehman pointed out that while PML-N continues to focus on positive policies and national unity, PTI's strategy of stoking anger and division has failed to resonate with the electorate, who are increasingly seeking leadership rooted in reconciliation and progress. Rehman also criticized PTI for fostering an environment of hostility and polarization through its rhetoric. Responding to questions about reduced public presence of Muhammad Mian Nawaz Sharif, he explained that he continues to guide his party, with Shehbaz Sharif now leading as Prime Minister. He expressed confidence in his brother and daughter, adding that he offers guidance whenever needed and closely monitors the situation. In response to another question, he criticized PTI for shirking responsibility for its mismanagement and failure to meet IMF commitments, which led the country to the brink of default. To another query, he explained that the Prime Minister is taking the recent all survey very seriously and is focused on improving the situation, adding, after addressing micro-economic indicators, he believes that in the next 3 to 4 years, unemployment will also decrease and GDP will show significant improvement.—DNA

CCP, DRAP sign MoU to strengthen cooperation

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) and the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation and strengthen oversight of Pakistan's pharmaceutical and therapeutic goods market through improved data and information sharing. The MoU was inked by Salman Amin, Member CCP, and Dr. Obaidullah, Chief Executive Officer DRAP. The ceremony held at CCP's head office was witnessed by Member CCP Saeed Ahmed Nawaz, Aamar Latif, Director Legal Affairs DRAP, and senior officials from both organiza-

tions, said a release issued here on Thursday. The MoU establishes a framework for closer coordination. Both institutions will share information, support joint enforcement, and strengthen monitoring of deceptive marketing practices, unfair competition, and misleading claims in the therapeutic goods and Over-the-Counter (OTC) categories. The agreement also covers digital data exchange, capacity building, and collaboration in research and policy analysis. Speaking at the ceremony, Member CCP Salman Amin said the partnership will ensure fair market practices which help economy and protect consumers. This collaboration is more imminent when online advertising and e-commerce have increased the risk of deceptive practices. He said that the pharmaceutical sector has a direct impact on public at large and both institutions have to work together to ensure transparency and fair competition. DRAP CEO Dr. Obaidullah said federal regulatory bodies operate under defined mandates but share common goals in certain domains. He noted that price deregulation and supply challenges require coordinated oversight. He added that harmonization and collaboration between institutions improve regulatory outcomes and help maintain availability and fair pricing of essential medicines.—DNA

Pakistan launches First Genomics venture

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has launched its first public-private genomics joint venture, receiving strong support from Chinese scientific institutions and technology partners. The initiative, unveiled Tuesday at the National Institute for Genomics and Advanced Biotechnology (NIGAB), is a collaboration between NIGAB, PARC-Agro Tech Company (PATCO), and Blazon Diagnostics, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. A Chinese delegation of researchers attended the inauguration at NARC, pledging

"their full support toward the success of this pioneering initiative." The event marked a new phase in China-Pakistan collaboration in high-tech biotechnology, especially in agriculture and diagnostics. Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Dr. Syed Murtaza Hassan Andrabi, called the project a milestone for Pakistan's scientific development, launched under the guidance of the Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research (NFS&R), Rana Tanveer Hus-

sain. "By developing indigenous genomic capabilities, we are laying the foundation for self-reliance in advanced research and diagnostics," said Dr. Andrabi. "This initiative will accelerate innovation that directly benefits our farmers, researchers, and healthcare sector." Chinese researchers welcomed the project as a natural extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), reflecting shared goals to modernize agriculture through technology. The venture is expected to

reduce Pakistan's reliance on foreign DNA sequencing services, save foreign exchange, and open new channels for China-Pakistan cooperation in biosciences. China's agricultural technology is already widely used in NARC. A Chinese JDF 1304 tractor (JDAG NE) was deployed on Tuesday for regenerative wheat planting, while a day before a rice harvesting was conducted using a Chinese rice harvester, highlighting China's growing role in agricultural modernization—DNA

**Rana Ihsaan
leads series
of major
trade**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strengthened its commercial and investment engagement with Nigeria and the wider West African region on Tuesday, as the Prime Minister's Coordinator for Commerce, Mr. Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, led a series of high-level trade and investment activities in Lagos. The day featured strategic meetings with Nigerian authorities, the inauguration of Pakistan's Pavilion at Beauty West Africa (BWA) 2025, and a networking dinner bringing together Pakistani exhibitors and key Nigerian industry stakeholders, said a release issued here on Thursday. Earlier in the day, Mr. Khan held a bilateral meeting with Ms. Aisha Rimi, Executive Secretary/CEO of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC). The discussion focused on Nigeria's investment landscape and the potential for enhanced Pakistani participation in sectors such as manufacturing, agro-processing, IT services, and logistics. Both sides also explored strengthening institutional cooperation between NIPC and Pakistan's Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to improve information-sharing, streamline procedures, and facilitate investor outreach. The two officials agreed to maintain momentum through continued dialogue and collaboration. Rana Ihsaan later inaugurated the Pakistan Pavilion at Beauty West Africa (BWA) 2025, the continent's largest beauty and cosmetics exhibition, held from 25-27 November at the Landmark Center. A strong contingent of 23 Pakistani cosmetics manufacturers—19 sponsored by TDAP and 4 self-financed—showcased a diverse range of products at the event, which features over 350 exhibitors and attracts more than 6,000 buyers annually.

IFA gives food outlets 3 days to register

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has called on every restaurant and food point in the federal capital to finish their registration process within the next three days, warning that action will begin immediately after the deadline. According to Deputy Director of Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) Dr Tahira Siddique, all businesses serving food must complete their registration by November 30 without delay. She said that the upcoming action will cover the entire city and no unregistered outlet will be allowed to continue operations once the deadline ends. Dr Tahira said that from December 1, any restaurant or food point operating without registration will not be permitted to function. She added that IFA inspection teams will conduct daily inspections across Islamabad to check compliance. Officials explained that unregistered outlets will face closures and heavy fines. The Islamabad Food Authority has clearly stated that the enforcement drive will begin right after the deadline, leaving no room for extensions or leniency. To facilitate business owners, the Food Authority has set up a special registration desk at the Business Facilitation Centre. According to the Deputy Director Operations, this desk is designed to help owners complete the licensing process quickly. The authority's staff is ensuring on-spot registration through a simple and timely procedure. In her statement, Dr Tahira reiterated that the department is focusing on bringing every food outlet under the registration system. She said that all outlets, regardless of size or location, must follow the same rules and finish the process within the given time. The authority has appealed to all restaurant and food point owners to complete registration by 30 November to avoid penalties. Officials said the drive aims to maintain public health standards and ensure that every food outlet meets the basic requirements set by the authority.—DNA

Agricultural chemicals worth 3.686b imported

ISLAMABAD: The imports of agriculture and other chemicals during the first four months of the current financial year grew by 8.41 per cent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July to October 2025, different agricultural and other chemicals valued at \$3.686 billion were imported as compared to the imports of \$3.374 billion of the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. However, the imports of the fertilizers manufactured in the country decreased by 9.69 per cent as 511,828 metric tons of fertilizers costing \$338.411 million were imported as compared to the imports of 612,684 million valued \$374.706 million of the same period of the last year. Meanwhile, 11,120 metric tons of the insecticides valued at \$59.268 million were imported during the period under review, as compared to the imports of 8,854 metric tons worth of \$45.213 million of the same period of the last year, the data revealed. In the first four months of the current financial year, the import of plastic material grew by 14.38 per cent as 834,292 metric tons of plastic material worth \$974.079 million were imported as compared to the imports of 666,825 metric tons valued at \$851.630 million of the same period of the last year, it added. The import of medicinal products also grew by 19.74 per cent as 14,131 metric tons of medicinal products costing \$500.162 million were also imported during the period under review, as compared to the imports of 12,181 metric tons valued at \$417.720 million.—DNA

A tale of two ceasefires

OSAMA AL-SHARIF

FOLLOWING the historic Sharm El-Sheikh summit on Donald Trump's Gaza peace plan in October and since the UN Security Council adopted that plan under Resolution 2803 last week, the US has claimed on several occasions that it has finally brought peace to the Middle East and that "a golden age" awaits the troubled region. Like many such declarations, one must separate the hyperbole from the improbable. In Gaza's case, nothing could be further from the sad and dismal reality that more than 2 million Palestinians have been going through since the so-called ceasefire came into effect last month. For Israel, particularly Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "ceasefire" can mean many things, but not the cessation of hostilities. Since the plan was signed by Trump and the guarantors of the agreement, Israel has killed more than 300 Palestinians in Gaza. The multiple ceasefire violations by the Israeli side have included using gunfire against civilians, shelling, airstrikes, property demolitions and arrests. Israel has brazenly reiterated that it is committed to the ceasefire after carrying out every breach, blaming Hamas and others for its response, which is always justified under the guise of self-defense. But that is not all. Under phase one of the agreement, Israel must open crossing points to allow the unfettered flow of humanitarian aid, medicine, mobile homes, tents and salvaging equipment. The UN and other international agencies have repeatedly described the situation in Gaza as extremely harsh since the ceasefire began, with only a limited improvement in safety and aid access. According to the UN, the situation remains a major humanitarian emergency, with widespread hunger, disease and inadequate shelter despite the pause in large-scale fighting. For Israel, particularly Netanyahu, 'ceasefire' can mean many things, but not the cessation of hostilities Harsh winter conditions have exacerbated the situation, leaving most people still struggling to secure basic necessities such as food, clean water, healthcare and sanitation. With 90 percent of the population displaced and most lacking proper shelter, famine conditions and "catastrophic" hunger persist, with tens of thousands of children suffering acute malnutrition. Despite setting up a monitoring site inside Israel, the US and other international observers have failed to hold Israel responsible for failing to meet its obligations under the Trump plan or to call it out for breaching the ceasefire multiple times by carrying out strikes and shelling, as well as mass demolitions in areas it occupies in Gaza. In fact, the US has blamed Hamas for threatening the faltering ceasefire, while never blaming Israel for failing to meet its obligations. The reality is that Israel violates the ceasefire agreement while acting with impunity. It is punishing the entire population of Gaza – forcing them to live in subhuman conditions. Israel has brushed aside appeals by the UN and other agencies to allow more aid in, including 1 million syringes that UNICEF says are needed to inoculate Palestinian children. The agency has said that at least two children are being killed in Gaza every day during the ceasefire.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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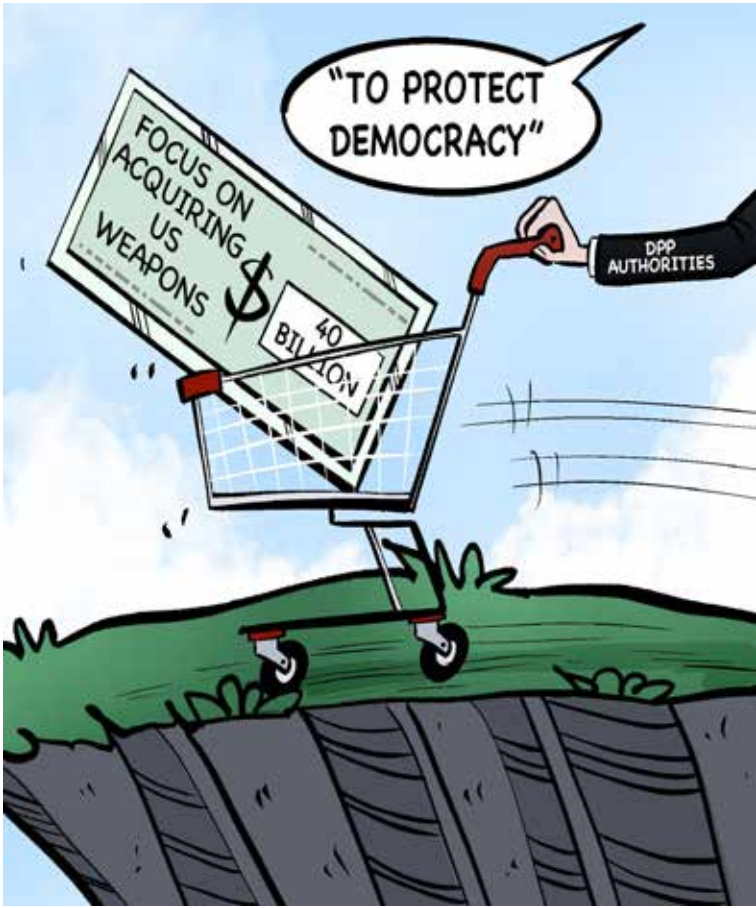
Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 160

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Israel is using the ceasefire deal to achieve its goals: ethnic cleansing, collective punishment, infanticide, displacement, artificial famine, mass demolitions and controlling aid to prevent most essential foodstuffs, including fresh meat, from entering the Strip. In fact, it is now becoming clear that Israel does not want to see the deal move into phase two, in which an international stabilization force is to be deployed in Gaza, thus delivering the internationalization of the crisis. Nor does it want to see any reconstruction effort take place. And, according to observers, Israel, which now occupies more than 44 percent of the enclave, does not want to withdraw – ever. In fact, Israel has been tampering with the so-called Yellow Line to encroach on even more Gazan territory. Another virtual ceasefire deal negotiated by the US is also on the verge of collapse. The one-year-old truce between Lebanon and Israel is one-sided, with Tel Aviv free of any commitment to it. According to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, Israeli forces have been responsible for more than 7,500 air violations and nearly 2,500 ground violations in the past year. This amounts to almost 10,000 breaches in less than a year of the ceasefire, which took effect on Nov. 27, 2024. According to the UN, Israeli forces carried out more than 500 airstrikes in Lebanon over the first 10 months of the ceasefire, killing at least 108 civilians, including 16 children. Israel has said it was targeting Hezbollah fighters and weapons caches. Still, this week it escalated the situation further by killing the group's second-in-command and top military leader, Ali Tabatabai, in a strike on Beirut's southern Dahieh district. According to the UN, Israel carried out more than 500 airstrikes in Lebanon over the first 10 months of the ceasefire. Netanyahu and his defense minister have repeatedly warned that, unless the Lebanese government disarms the pro-Iran group, Israel will do the job itself. The Israeli army, which occupies five strategic points in southern Lebanon, has been carrying out maneuvers in preparation for a possible invasion. The US has again defended Israel's right to attack Lebanon, even when such attacks clearly violate the ceasefire agreement and UNSC Resolution 1701. Israel claims, without providing evidence, that Hezbollah has been rearming itself, even as it admits that the party was gravely wounded during last year's war. In Lebanon's case, Washington has clearly taken the side of Israel, while putting pressure on a weak Lebanese government to carry out what has been described as an impossible task: disarming Hezbollah. At the same time, the US has offered no guarantees that, once Hezbollah is neutralized, Israel will withdraw entirely from southern Lebanon and allow the rebuilding of the tens of villages it has destroyed. In both Gaza and Lebanon, Israel's concept of a ceasefire clearly has nothing to do with meeting its obligations. Such agreements apply only to the other side, which must withstand Israeli blows without responding. And God forbid if the other side does retaliate. Israel's military might would be unleashed to punish the culprit. In Gaza's case, the US is key to overseeing the deal's implementation. But it has failed to put pressure on Netanyahu to open the crossing points and allow all humanitarian aid to flow to end the horrific and inhumane conditions that more than 2 million Palestinians are being forced to endure. In the case of Lebanon, Washington is allowing Israel to wage war under the guise of a ceasefire against a weak and damaged country. Both cases present untenable situations that render the claim of peace in the region comical, if not tragic.

The Last Generation That Knew Its Elders

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Schools and religious institutions can also play a vital role by educating children and parents alike about the psychological and physical harms of excessive screen use, from weakened attention span to disturbed sleep and fractured relationships. Community campaigns and media programmes should highlight stories like that of my beloved Mianji, reminding us that health, longevity, and inner peace have long been linked to movement, simplicity, moderation, spirituality, and human connection...

THERE was a time when the rhythm of life flowed with a natural grace, unhurried and unfragmented, when families found contentment in gathering around their elders and absorbing the wisdom of their years. Among the memorable figures of that simpler age was the maternal grandfather of my Tai Ammi, whom everyone affectionately called Mianji. He lived to be about 108 years old, and age had done little to diminish the sharpness of his mind or the calm composure of his spirit. Whenever he came to our home, it was as though a quiet festival had arrived. All the children would instinctively gather around him, sitting on the floor near his Charpai, waiting for him to speak. We would bombard him with questions—some sensible, some utterly childish—and he would never show the slightest sign of fatigue or irritation. His patience seemed endless, his affection inexhaustible. If we asked him the secret of his long life and robust health, he would smile, stroke his beard, and repeat the same few principles that had shaped his existence. Walk as much as you can, he would say; eat fresh and simple food; fill your plate with vegetables and fruits; rise early and sleep early; never abandon the five daily prayers; and, he would add with a hint of pride, never sleep under a fan. In those days, this last habit sounded strange even to us children, but for him it was part of a disciplined, self-controlled life. He would narrate eye-witness accounts of events from a distant past, tell instructive stories, and share what he called “the secret of success”—contentment, gratitude, honest work, and trust in Almighty Allah. In those times, nearly every household followed a similar pattern. Elders were not merely present; they were central to the moral and emotional life of the family. Serving them was not deemed a burden but an honour. People took pains to care for their elderly parents and grandparents, to sit with them after meals, to listen to their memories and advice. Children were gently pushed to spend time with their elders, to learn from their experience, and to absorb, almost unconsciously, the etiquette of life. Perhaps it was the absence of modern distractions,

perhaps it was the habit of being content in every situation, or perhaps it was the cleanliness of the eyes and heart that comes from living closer to nature and faith. But one thing is certain; the home was more of a living, breathing institution, and less of a hotel with isolated rooms. Then came a silent revolution in the form of mobile phones and digital devices. On the surface, it promised connectivity and convenience. In practice, it quietly rearranged the architecture of our relationships. Today, it is common to see a father, mother, son, and daughter all sitting in the same room, yet each imprisoned within the small glowing screen held in their hand. They are physically together but emotionally scattered in four different worlds. Conversations are reduced to brief interruptions between notifications. Laughter, once shared across the room, is now directed at short videos made by strangers. We often say, “Mobile phones are a necessity of modern life,” and to some extent this is true. Yet, for many young people, the device has moved far beyond necessity and entered the realm of addiction. The idea of spending even a few hours without a phone feels unbearable. When, due to security concerns, mobile services are suspended for a day or two, life itself appears to be suspended. People panic, feel restless, and behave as though some vital organ of the body has been removed. The tragedy is not confined to adults. It has seeped into the nursery. It is now a common sight that a child will only eat if cartoons are playing on a mobile phone. To gain a few moments of peace, mothers place a device in the small hands of their children, believing that this will give them time to manage other chores. The child sits mesmerised for hours, eyes fixed, mind numbed, and body inactive. Later, when that same child calls out, the parents often do not respond. Their own ears are occupied by earphones, their own attention captured by the same digital demon they once placed in their child's hands. As a nation, we appear to have been taken hostage by this tiny piece of technology. It has invaded our bedrooms, our dining tables, our mosques, our classrooms, and even our funerals. If this trend continues unchecked, the future will not merely be

uncomfortable; it will be frightening and painful. We risk raising a generation that is physically present but emotionally absent, connected to the world yet detached from their own families, informed about everything yet wise about nothing. The way forward, however, does not lie in rejecting technology altogether. That would neither be realistic nor fair. The solution lies in restoring balance and reclaiming control. Families must consciously design “phone-free zones” and “phone-free times” inside the house—such as at meals, during family gatherings, and in the hour before sleeping. Parents must recognise that the first model of behaviour for a child is not a cartoon hero on a screen, but the adults in the home. If the parent is permanently glued to the phone, any lecture about reducing screen time will ring hollow. Schools and religious institutions can also play a vital role by educating children and parents alike about the psychological and physical harms of excessive screen use, from weakened attention span to disturbed sleep and fractured relationships. Community campaigns and media programmes should highlight stories like that of my beloved Mianji, reminding us that health, longevity, and inner peace have long been linked to movement, simplicity, moderation, spirituality, and human connection—not to endless scrolling and virtual applause. On an individual level, each of us must ask a hard question: who is the master and who is the servant? The mobile phone was made to serve us, not to rule us. We can begin with small, firm steps. Keep the phone away while talking to parents and grandparents. Visit them without the excuse of a “missed call” or a “WhatsApp message.” Listen once again to their stories, even if we think we have heard them before. Replace one hour of mindless browsing with a quiet walk, a page of a good book, or a meaningful conversation. If we manage to do this, perhaps we will not only protect the future of our children but also regain a precious part of our past. We may not live to be one hundred and eight like Mianji, but we can surely strive to live lives that are richer in love, calmer in spirit, and closer to the values that once made our homes true schools of character.

The Hidden Epdemic

Saman Zahra



Several high-profile cases have brought national and international attention to the issue. The 2002 case of Mukhtaran Mai exposed grave failures in protecting women in rural areas. The tragic murder of Zainab Ansari in 2018 mobilized public outrage and resulted in legal reforms focused on child protection. The Lahore Motorway case in 2020 revealed gaps in policing and public safety. The killings of Noor Mukadam (2021) and other similar cases highlighted...

THE issue of rape in Pakistan remains one of the most disturbing and persistent challenges within the domain of public safety, criminal justice and gender relations. Understanding the legal, social and structural dimensions of the problem is necessary for an honest discussion on why sexual violence continues at alarming levels and why so many survivors remain without justice. In Pakistan, rape is defined under Section 375 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) 1860. According to this provision, rape occurs when a man has sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent. Several specific conditions clarify this definition. Consent obtained through threats of death or serious harm is not considered valid. A woman below sixteen years of age is legally unable to consent, making intercourse with her rape regardless of circumstances. Furthermore, consent given under the mistaken belief that the man is her husband also falls under the definition of rape. These provisions show that the law recognizes both physical force and coercion as central elements of the crime, while also acknowledging deception and age-related vulnerability. Legal definitions alone, however, provide only part of the picture. Rape in Pakistan is situated within a complex social structure shaped by gender norms, cultural expectations and deep-rooted inequalities. Attitudes toward sexual violence are affected by several factors: restrictive views on sexuality, limited knowledge about bodily autonomy, increasing exposure to global cultural trends, weak social protection systems and the exploitation of vulnerable individuals by those in positions of influence. Psychological aspects further complicate the situation. Survivors often experience long-term trauma, anxiety, fear and mistrust. Childhood abuse, adverse family environments and the normalization of gender-based violence contribute to a cycle in which harm continues across generations. The importance of openly addressing rape in Pakistan cannot be overstated. Silence and denial only deepen the suffering of victims and strengthen the social obstacles they face. Large segments of the population have limited understanding of how widespread the problem is or what legal protections exist for victims. The number of reported cases is far smaller than the actual number of incidents. Fear of blame, pressure from family or community and widespread distrust in the justice process stop survivors from coming forward. Many who do report are subjected to harsh questioning, stigma and isolation. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, more than eleven cases of rape are reported

every day, while countless others remain hidden due to fear and lack of support. Awareness, education and preventive measures are therefore essential for reducing violence and encouraging victims to seek help. Historical and contemporary data highlight both long-term patterns and recent fluctuations. A study conducted in 1988 revealed that 72 percent of women who were held in custody had experienced some form of abuse, while 20 to 30 percent of women across the country faced domestic violence. Between 2002 and 2004, Karachi recorded between 61 and 78 rape cases annually based on local FIRs, already a troubling figure given how many incidents go unreported. A 2004 report documented 728 rape cases, including gang rapes, along with other acts of violence such as assault, acid attacks and murder. From 2006 to 2016, Punjab saw reported cases double—from around 1,500 per year to nearly 3,000. More recent national data from 2017 to 2024 shows sharp ups and downs: 3,300 cases in 2017, rising to over 4,300 in 2019, decreasing in 2020, then jumping to more than 5,100 in 2021. Reports dropped again in 2022, rose to around 6,600 in 2023 and saw a modest decline in 2024. These numbers, although alarming, still fail to reflect the full magnitude of the problem because underreporting remains widespread. Several high-profile cases have brought national and international attention to the issue. The 2002 case of Mukhtaran Mai exposed grave failures in protecting women in rural areas. The tragic murder of Zainab Ansari in 2018 mobilized public outrage and resulted in legal reforms focused on child protection. The Lahore Motorway case in 2020 revealed gaps in policing and public safety. The killings of Noor Mukadam (2021) and other similar cases highlighted the dangers women face even in supposedly secure environments. Mass harassment incidents, such as the Minare-Pakistan case in 2021, demonstrated that collective violence against women is not limited to isolated criminals but can occur in public spaces. Cases like Dua Zehra (2022) and Fatima (2023) continued to raise concerns about child protection and legal loopholes. By 2024, Lahore remained the city with the highest number of documented rape cases, although conviction rates stayed low across the country. Child abuse is another deeply troubling aspect. Early 2023 data from Punjab showed 1,390 incidents of child abuse, many involving boys and typically committed by people known to the victims. Such cases highlight the need for stronger safeguards for children at home, in schools and in workplaces. Section 376 of the PPC addresses punishments

for rape. Sentences range from ten to twenty-five years imprisonment, or the death penalty in certain cases. Aggravated forms of rape—such as crimes involving children, persons with disabilities, severe physical harm, or the misuse of official authority—carry harsher penalties, including life imprisonment. Over the years, legal reforms have attempted to strengthen the system. The Criminal Law Amendment of 2016 expanded the scope of Section 376, introduced greater protections for vulnerable victims and required the use of scientific evidence such as DNA. The 2006 amendments earlier separated rape from the Hudood Ordinance, which had long created legal complications for victims seeking justice. More recently, the 2020 Anti-Rape Ordinance introduced special courts for swift trials, crisis cells for victim support, improved forensic procedures and chemical castration for repeat offenders. Reports from 2018 to 2021 documented high levels of sexual violence, workplace harassment and custodial abuse, with Punjab again reporting the most incidents. Government and civil society responses included awareness campaigns, helplines, legal amendments and school-based safety initiatives. Survivors of rape face numerous obstacles not only in the legal process but also in their daily lives. Cultural norms frequently blame victims rather than perpetrators. Many fear retaliation from the offender or from community members who want to suppress the incident. Weak investigative procedures, delayed trials and gaps in forensic capabilities further discourage reporting. Psychological effects such as depression, fear, post-traumatic stress and social withdrawal often last for years. International estimates from the United Nations suggest that less than ten percent of rape cases are reported and Pakistan's rate is likely even lower. Addressing sexual violence requires multiple, consistent efforts. Legal reforms must be matched with effective implementation, faster trials, trained investigators and reliable forensic processes. Consent education in schools and communities is important for reducing harmful attitudes. Public awareness campaigns can help counter victim-blaming and encourage families to support survivors. NGOs and community groups play an important role in providing safe spaces, counseling and legal guidance. Young people can contribute by volunteering in awareness programs, using social media responsibly to highlight safety issues and promoting respectful behavior in their surroundings. Reducing rape in Pakistan is not only a legal challenge but also a social one. It requires a collective willingness to confront uncomfortable realities, protect those who come forward and build systems that prioritize safety, dignity and justice for all.

Briefs

**Pakistan-GCC
free trade
accord in
final stages:
PM Shehbaz**

FROM PAGE 01
many having made the kingdom their second home. He said that Pakistan's financial institutions had been important contributors to Bahrain's financial sector for over half a century. The minister said that Bahrain was witnessing a generational transformation as the region was becoming a centre of innovation, sustainability, and technological excellence, in which Bahrain was playing a leading role. Similarly, in digital technology, Bahrain's high-capacity subsea cables and expanding digital infrastructure were positioning it as a regional center for data and connectivity, opening opportunities for Pakistani firms in software engineering, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and next-generation digital services. The finance minister said that as Bahrain was advancing Vision 2030 and laying the foundations for Vision 2050, it saw Pakistan as a partner in a shared economic future.

**Romanian
envoy
talks about...**

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan's first Romanian language lecture at NUML University, welcoming its inaugural Romanian language lecturer, Dr. Oana Ursache. Addressing the broader geopolitical situation, Ambassador Stoenescu painted a sober picture of security challenges facing Europe—particularly the ramifications of Russia's war on Ukraine. He noted that repeated drone attacks on Ukrainian ports along the Danube have brought the conflict close to Romania's borders. He pointed to recent NATO and EU initiatives—such as Eastern Sentry, Eastern Flank Watch, and enhanced airspace monitoring—as critical steps in strengthening regional security. The ambassador stressed that violations of Allied airspace by Russian drones and aircraft “must not become the new normal.” Romania, he said, remains steadfast in supporting Ukraine, defending democratic values, and safeguarding regional and international security. “We are proud and determined to defend Romania's sovereignty and independence — and we do not stand alone,” he affirmed. He reiterated Romania's full support for the Republic of Moldova's EU path, while acknowledging the hybrid threats Moldova continues to face. Ambassador Stoenescu stressed that Romania's membership in the EU, NATO, and its strategic partnership with the United States remain pillars of its foreign policy. In a rapidly changing world, he said, Romania remains a reliable and predictable partner committed to international peace and stability. Concluding his address, the ambassador expressed optimism about the future of Romania-Pakistan relations. “As we celebrate Romania's National Day and over six decades of diplomatic relations, we look back with pride at all that our two countries have achieved together,” he said. “Our friendship continues to grow across culture, education, trade and security. By building on this solid foundation, we will deepen our partnership and open new avenues of cooperation.”

**US govt
stops...**

FROM PAGE 01
The two soldiers, members of the West Virginia National Guard, were part of a “high-visibility patrol” around 2:15pm ET (1915 GMT) near the corner of 17th and I streets, a few blocks from the White House. The suspect came around a corner and “ambushed” them, Metropolitan Police Assistant Chief Jeff Carroll said at a press briefing. After an exchange of gunfire, other National Guard troops were able to subdue the shooter, he said. The two wounded soldiers were in critical condition at local hospitals, FBI Director Kash Patel said. The shooter appeared to have acted alone, officials said.

Emmanuel Macron to announce France restoring voluntary military service

France's top general, armed forces chief of staff Fabien Mandon, sparked uproar at home last week by warning that France must be ready “to lose its children”, adding that Russia is “preparing for a confrontation by 2030 with our countries”

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron is Thursday to announce that France is restoring military service on a voluntary basis in the face of the growing threat posed by Russia and the risk of a new conflict breaking out in Europe. Almost three decades after France scrapped conscription, the head of state is due to lay out the change in a speech from 1000 GMT on a visit to an infantry brigade stationed in the Alps in southeastern France, said a presidential official, asking not to be named. The announcement will come more than three and a half years into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with Macron and other French officials warning that Moscow risks not stopping at Ukraine's borders. France's top general, armed forces chief of staff Fabien Mandon, sparked uproar at home last week by warning that France must be ready “to lose its children”, adding that Russia is “preparing for a confrontation by 2030 with our countries”. Macron told the RTL broadcaster he would be announcing a “transformation of national service into a new form” on Thursday but did not provide further details. A source with knowledge of the matter, who asked not



to be named, told AFP that the plan is for 2,000 to 3,000 people to be trained up in the first year, aiming to increase those signing up over time to 50,000 per year. “It will start slowly,” said the source. This “new form of national service” will be “on a voluntary basis”, said a presidential official. An adviser to Macron, also requesting anonymity, emphasised it would be launched at a time of tight budget constraints. Its implementation will therefore be “phased in over time,” said the adviser, promising a “realistic” project that “takes into account our current resources”. While around a dozen states have some form of conscription, the use of military service is uneven across Europe. But France would join European countries like Baltic states Latvia and Lithuania which have brought it back in recent years, while others such as Denmark have toughened its terms. There is so far no suggestion that the military service in France would be compulsory, as it was before then-president Jacques Chirac abolished conscription in 1997 as part of the reform of the army. Military service is seen as a way of bolstering armies with recruits, but also of providing a large pool of potential reservists, who could be called up in the case of a future war. The French armed forces have approximately 200,000 active military personnel and 47,000 reservists, numbers expected to increase to 210,000 and 80,000 respectively by 2030. Accused of warmongering by the left, General Mandon has expressed no regret over his comments last week, saying the aim was to “alert and prepare” amid a “rapidly deteriorating” context. Mandon argued on Saturday that the reactions to his comments “show that this is something that was perhaps not sufficiently perceived in our population”. But ahead of Thursday's announcement, Macron and other officials have been at pains to douse the outcry caused by the general's forthright comments and fears that French youth were heading for the front lines. The president on Tuesday said he needed to dispel any notion “we are going to send our young people to Ukraine”. — Agencies

Abu Dhabi T10: Akif javed's three-fer sets up easy win for Ajman Titans

ABU DHABI: Ajman Titans left-arm pacer Akif Javed delivered an outstanding spell to power his side to a 21-run victory over Deccan Gladiators in the 21st fixture of the Abu Dhabi T10 here on Wednesday. Akif took three for five in his two overs, which restricted Gladiators to 88-7 in pursuit of a 110-run target. Andre Russell (13) departed in the second over, caught by Alex Hales off Akif's bowling. The towering pacer then castled Marcus Stoinis on the very next ball for a duck to put his side in a position of strength. However, skipper Nicholas Pooran and Tom Kohler

Cadmire stitched a 41-run stand, bringing the scorecard to 61 in 5.2 overs. But it was Akif again, who removed dangerous Pooran, putting the Titans firmly on course for the victory. Pooran hit two sixes and two fours in his 24 from 15, while Cadmore 32 from 23 deliveries was laced with three fours and a six. After the solid stand, Gladiators lost wickets in quick succession, eventually resulting in a loss that puts them in second spot on the points table. Akif Javed was named the player of the match for his outstanding performance. Earlier, after being put

into bat first, Ajman Titans racked up 109-6 at the end of their 10 overs. Skipper Moeen Ali led the charge with a brisk 31 off just 12, studded with three sixes and two fours. Alex Hales and Aneurin Donald also contributed with the bat, scoring 24 and 25 runs respectively. In the 22nd fixture of the tournament, Aspin Stallions defeated Royal Champs by a narrow seven-run margin. Chasing 135, Champs managed to score 127-2 in their allotted 10 overs, courtesy of Brandon McMullen's quick-fire 59* off 28 balls, laced with four sixes and an equal number of boundaries. — Agencies

Pope to meet Erdogan in Turkey in first overseas trip

ABOARD THE PAPAL PLANE: Pope Leo XIV set off for Turkey Thursday for the first overseas trip of his papacy, which includes a meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and comes amid acute tensions in the region. The trip, which includes a second leg to Lebanon, begins in the Turkish capital Ankara, where the first American pope is expected to arrive shortly after midday. There, he will address authorities, civil society and the diplomatic corps before heading to Istanbul in the early evening. Leo's first steps abroad will be scrutinised by the world's media, with more than 80 journalists accompanying him on his papal plane. — APP

Gilgeous-Alexander scores 40 points in Thunder win

OKLAHOMA: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 40 points to help the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 10th successive NBA win, despite being doubtful for the game with illness. Listed as ill on Thunder's injury report, Gilgeous-Alexander starred in a 113-105 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves in the NBA Cup at Paycom Center. The 27-year-old has registered at least 20 points in 91 consecutive games - the third longest streak in NBA history. Anthony Edwards recorded 31 points and eight rebounds for the Timberwolves, who have lost three games in a row. Oklahoma are only the fifth team in NBA history to begin a season with 18 wins and one defeat, while they have won all three NBA Cup games to lead West Group A. The NBA Cup is an in-season tournament where teams compete for a trophy, but results also count towards the overall season standings. The Thunder host the Phoenix Suns on Saturday, while the Timberwolves welcome the Boston Celtics. The Toronto Raptors qualified for the quarter-finals with a 97-95 home win against the Indiana Pacers. Brandon Ingram scored in the last second to seal the Raptors' ninth victory in succession. Reed Sheppard put in a career-best 31-point performance as the Houston Rockets beat the Golden State Warriors 104-100 in San Francisco. — Agencies

Pakistan to resolve IMF-identified gaps: FinMin

FROM PAGE 01
The IMF board's upcoming decisions will show the way forward.” The Fund's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment (GCDA) on Pakistan, which was released last week, warned that persistent corruption and weak institutions continue to undermine the country's economic development even as it stabilises under an Extended Fund Facility (EFF). “Corruption is a persistent challenge in Pakistan, with significant adverse implications for economic development,” the report states. It said indicators reflect weak control of corruption over time, with negative consequences for the effectiveness of public spending, revenue collection and trust in the legal system. The publication of the report is a precondition for the IMF executive board's approval of a \$1.2 billion disbursement next month under the \$7 billion programme. The Washington-based lender said policy efforts under the EFF have already delivered “significant progress” in stabilising the economy and rebuilding confidence. The IMF notes that Pakistanis are often compelled to make continuous payments to officials to obtain basic services, while funds lost to corruption could otherwise support higher production and development. While vulnerabilities exist at all levels of government, the IMF finds that the most economically damaging manifestations involve “privileged entities” that exert influence over key economic sectors, including those owned by or affiliated with the state. The report says political and economic elites have obstructed economic development by seizing control of policies and capturing public benefits for their own gain.

Swiss Super-G Olympic champion Gut-Behrami out of Winter Games

LAUSANNE: Switzerland's Super-G Olympic champion Lara Gut-Behrami will miss the 2026 Winter Games with a serious knee injury, the Swiss ski federation announced on Thursday. Gut-Behrami ruptured knee ligaments while training in the United States a week ago and has left the door open to making a u-turn on her decision to retire at the end of the season. The 34-year-old had been a leading contender for the Games in Milan-Cortina, running between February 6 and 22. “I had a totally different idea for the coming months and I was looking forward to this season,” Gut-Behrami said in the federation's statement. “For now, my goal is to recover from this injury and regain all my physical ability. “Only then will I know what the future holds for me,” she added. Gut-Behrami, who won gold in Beijing three years ago, sustained the injury in Copper Mountain, Colorado, last Thursday after catching a gate with her hand on a bump before rolling over. — APP

Liverpool suffer heavy defeat to PSV, extend worst run in 71 Years

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool endured a crushing 4-1 defeat to PSV here at Anfield on Wednesday, extending their worst run of form in 71 years. The heavy loss marked their ninth defeat in 12 games across all competitions, increasing doubts over Arne Slot's ability to arrest the club's on-going decline. PSV struck early, taking the lead in the 6th minute after Virgil van Dijk conceded a penalty for a handball inside the box. Ivan Perisic made no mistake from the spot, giving the visitors the advantage. Liverpool responded swiftly, with Dominik Szoboszlai levelling the score just 10 minutes later. After Matej Kovar fumbled a shot from Cody Gakpo, Szoboszlai was on hand to tap in the rebound and restore parity. The Reds pressed for control, with Gakpo coming close to putting them ahead, and van Dijk's header rattling the post. However, Liverpool were punished once again in the 37th minute when Mauro Junior broke through



the defence and squared the ball for Guus Til, who calmly finished to put PSV back in front. The second half saw Liverpool's woes deepen. Substitute Couhaib Driouech pounced on a rebound from Ricardo Pepi's shot to make it 3-1, sending the travelling PSV supporters into raptures. Driouech then struck again in stop-

page time, firing into the bottom corner after a swift counter-attack to seal PSV's first win over an English side since 2008. The defeat leaves Liverpool languishing in 13th place in their Champions League group, further intensifying the pressure on Slot and his team as they fight to secure a top-eight finish. — Agencies

Mbappe scores four as Real Madrid defeat Olympiacos in chaotic UEFA clash

Mbappe Fires Stunning Four-Goal Masterclass as Real Madrid Edge Olympiacos 4-3 in Thrilling Champions League Clash to End Winless Run and Set New European Records for the French Superstar

PIRAEUS: Kylian Mbappe delivered a sensational four-goal performance as Real Madrid edged Olympiacos 4-3 in a pulsating Champions League clash here at the Georgios Karaiskakis Stadium on Wednesday, ending their three-match winless run in all competitions. Olympiacos stunned the visitors early on when Francisco Chiquinho drilled a 20-yard strike into the bottom corner. However, Madrid responded with a devastating burst of attacking football, led by Mbappe, who produced the second-fastest hat-trick in Champions League history. The French forward levelled the score after latching on to a perfectly weighted pass from Vinicius Junior, before heading in Arda Guler's cross moments later. He completed a remarkable seven-minute treble soon afterwards, beating the off-side trap and finishing calmly from Eduardo Camavinga's through ball. Madrid continued to threaten, with Aurelien Tchouameni striking the bar and Vinicius having a goal ruled out for offside in the build-up. Despite being without five defenders and their first-choice goalkeeper through injury and illness, Los Blancos dominated large spells of the encounter. Olympiacos refused to give in. Substitute Mehdi Taremi powered in a header to reduce the deficit, only for Mbappe to restore Madrid's two-goal cushion with a close-range finish from Vinicius' pass. Ayoub El Kaabi's late header made it 4-3, but Madrid held firm in the closing minutes. Mbappe, now the Champions League's top scorer this season with nine goals in five

matches, described the night as “a pleasure”, praising his team-mates for their service. His four goals came from just six attempts, underlining his clinical touch.

The 26-year-old also set several records, becoming the first Real Madrid player to score four goals in a European away match and extending his tally to four

career four-goal hauls. Real Madrid will host Manchester City on 10 December, while Olympiacos travel to Kairat Almaty on 9 December. — Agencies



Briefs

Efforts afoot to make regulatory system business friendly

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan Thursday highlighted the efforts being accelerated on special directives of the Prime Minister to make the regulatory system business-friendly by removing unnecessary restrictions "The vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is to restore investor confidence and stimulate economic activity," he said while chairing a meeting of the Regulatory Reforms Sub-Committee to review reform measures concerning listed companies. Representatives from the SECP, State Bank of Pakistan, and the Board of Investment, including Scott Jacob, attended the meeting. The committee held a detailed discussion on reform strategies for listed companies, expressing concerns over Pakistan's weak stock market performance, the limited scale of listed companies, and their low contribution to GDP. Now, the SAPM said, the PM's vision was becoming a reality through regulatory improvements that will promote business and investment, a news release said. He further noted that reforms have been designed based on global best practices, focusing on less regulated, high-performance models with minimal restrictions, aimed at strengthening compliance mechanisms while encouraging operational flexibility. "These reforms will reduce compliance pressures on businesses and help implement better regulatory standards.—APP

PSX stays bullish, gains 2,184 more points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday continued its bullish momentum, surging by 2,184.78 points, a positive change of 1.34 percent, closing at 165,373.31 points compared to 163,188.53 points on the previous trading day. A total of 498.36 million shares were traded in the ready market with a value of Rs30.59 billion, compared to 636.40 million shares worth Rs30.91 billion in the previous session. Market capitalization increased to Rs18,744 trillion from Rs18,512 trillion Out of 484 active companies, 289 closed higher, 152 declined, while 43 remained unchanged. The leading companies in terms of ready-market turnover were Dost Steels Ltd. with 48.39 million shares, followed by WorldCall Telecom with 36.70 million shares, and Beco Steel Ltd. with 25.10 million shares. The top gainers were PIA Holding Company Limited-B, which increased by Rs1,289.13 to close at Rs24,495.50, and Pakistan Services Limited, rising by Rs52.41 to close at Rs1,333.93. Conversely, the major losers were Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited, which declined by Rs190.00 to close at Rs29,400.00, and Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited, decreasing by Rs29.99 to close at Rs9,370.00.—APP

Gold prices remain unchanged, silver rates go up

ISLAMABAD: The price of per tola of 24-karat gold on Thursday remained unchanged at Rs 438,862, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA). Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold stayed stable at Rs 376,253, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold also remained unchanged at Rs 344,911. In the international market, gold prices stood at \$4,165 with no change recorded. However, silver witnessed an upward trend in the domestic market. The price of per tola silver increased by Rs 160 to reach Rs 5,642, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs 138 to Rs 4,837. International silver prices also increased by \$1.60, reaching \$53.70.—APP

Pakistan, UAE reaffirm resolve to deepening ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Salem M. Salem AlBawab Al Zaabi, the new Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan, called on Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, at the Finance Division today. The meeting commenced with Ambassador Al Zaabi expressing his appreciation for the warm welcome he has received since assuming his diplomatic assignment in Pakistan. He noted the deep historical linkages between the peoples of Pakistan and the UAE, highlighting the longstanding contributions of Pakistani professionals across sectors in the UAE, including banking, finance, defence, and public administration. He underscored that strengthening bilateral ties, particularly in strategic, economic, and cultural dimensions, would be a key priority of his tenure. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed the Ambassador and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further deepening its fraternal partnership with the UAE. He acknowledged the UAE's consistent support to Pakistan across multiple fronts, including trade, investment, remittances, government-to-government financing, and the UAE's crucial backing in Pakistan's engagements with international financial institutions. He further noted the frequent high-level interactions between the leadership of both countries as a testament to their close and enduring ties. The Minister emphasized that Pakistan's economic policy direction is firmly oriented toward expanding trade and attracting long-term investment, moving beyond traditional support mechanisms. He appreciated ongoing UAE investments in key sectors such as ports, digital banking, logistics, and infrastructure and encouraged further participation from UAE sovereign funds, private sector entities, and multinational corporations. He highlighted Pakistan's significant



potential in IT, AI, fintech, agriculture, minerals, logistics, and higher education collaboration. Ambassador Al Zaabi informed the Minister that expanding economic cooperation remains one of his foremost objectives. He expressed the UAE's strong interest in enhancing bilateral trade volumes, attracting Pakistani businesses and technology

firms to the UAE, and bringing more UAE investors to Pakistan. He referenced ongoing engagement with companies in sectors including agriculture, infrastructure, mining, ports, financial services, and virtual assets. The Ambassador also briefed the Minister on the UAE government's major reforms in visa facilitation for Pakistani na-

tionals. He stated that nearly 500 visas are being processed daily and explained that new measures, including online visa processing, e-visas without passport stamping, and enhanced system-to-system linkages with relevant Pakistani authorities, are being implemented to further streamline travel for businesspersons and visitors.

Hong Kong searches for missing after city's deadliest blaze

HONG KONG: Hong Kong firefighters were scouring a still-burning apartment complex for hundreds of missing people on Thursday, a day after the blaze tore through the high-rises, killing at least 44. The inferno – the financial hub's worst in decades – took hold on Wednesday afternoon in an eight-building housing estate with 2,000 apartments and sent shockwaves through the city, which has some of the world's most densely populated and tallest residential blocks. Flames were still spotted in some of the windows while multiple fire hoses sprayed the scorched exteriors, an AFP reporter saw around noon on Thursday. Crowds gathered in nearby streets and public areas to organise aid for displaced residents and firefighters, part of a spontaneous effort that drew people from across the city. "It's truly touching. The spirit of Hong Kong people is that when one is in trouble, everyone lends support... It shows that Hong Kong people are full of love," said Stone Ngai, 38, one of the organisers of an impromptu aid station. Police said early on Thursday they arrested three men in connection with the fire, after flammable materials left during maintenance work caused the blaze "to spread rapidly beyond control". Officers searched premises in a separate neighbourhood on Thursday morning, taking away documents in binders in relation to the three people arrested, who police suspect "acted with gross negligence" by leaving foam packaging at the site of the fire. Hong Kong authorities will immediately inspect all housing estates undergoing major works following the disaster, the city's leader John Lee said. Multiple residents of Wang Fuk Court, located in Hong Kong's northern district of Tai Po, told AFP that they did not hear any fire alarm and had to go door-to-door to alert neighbours to the danger. "The fire spread so quickly. I saw one hose trying to save several buildings, and I felt it was far too slow," said a man surnamed Suen, recalling his plight the day before. "Ringing doorbells, knocking on doors, alerting the neighbours, telling them to leave – that's what the situation was like." Another displaced resident, Wong Sik-kam, recalled how his son was one of the firefighters dispatched to the scene. "My son called me and told me about the fire... I thought it was just a normal fire, like a kitchen accident that would be put out. Who knew it would get so bad?" Wong said. Hong Kong's fire department raised the death toll to 44 on Thursday morning. Among the dead was a 37-year-old firefighter, who was found with burns on his face half an hour after losing contact with colleagues, according to the fire service director Andy Yeung. A government spokesman told AFP that 61 people were being treated in hospital. Fifteen were in a critical condition, 27 in a serious condition and 19 were stable. City leader Lee said in the early hours of Thursday that 279 were unaccounted for, though firefighters said later that they had established contact with some of those people. Lee said more than 900 people sought refuge at temporary shelters overnight. The Indonesian consulate said around noon that two of the deceased were Indonesians working as migrant domestic workers. On Wednesday night, sections of charred scaffolding fell from the burning blocks and flames could be seen inside apartments, sometimes belching out through windows into the night sky, casting an eerie orange glow on surrounding buildings. "The temperature at the scene is very high and there are some floors where we have been unable to reach people who requested help, but we will keep trying," said Derek Armstrong Chan, the deputy director of fire service operations. He said the wind and drifting debris likely spread the fire from one building to another, although he added that authorities are investigating the cause of the blaze. Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed condolences to the victims, including "the firefighter who died in the line of duty", according to state media. Lee said he was "deeply saddened" and that all government departments were assisting residents affected by the fire. —DNA

Rwanda camp giving second chance to genocidal enemies

RUHENGARI: As his comrades died of starvation and thirst around him, Mbale Hafashimana Amos finally decided to flee the Congolese bush for a country he had always been told would butcher him on . Mbale, an ethnic Hutu, was part of a militia in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo called the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), initially formed by those who fled across the border after committing the Rwandan genocide in 1994. But the FDLR has been pushed to the brink of annihilation this year as a Rwanda-backed armed group, the M23, seized large parts of the region. By April, "M23 pushed us to a place where we couldn't get anything to eat," said Mbale, 37. "I saw over 150 soldiers die of starvation and dehydration. It was horrifying. This is a story I will tell anyone I meet for the rest of my days."

Rwanda denies backing the M23, despite evidence from multiple international agencies, partly because the group has been accused of crimes against humanity. But Rwanda has also earned praise for welcoming and rehabilitating FDLR members who surrender. They are all ethnic Hutus, and include recent recruits as well as those who directly participated in the 1994 genocide, in which around 800,000 people, mostly ethnic Tutsis, were slaughtered. When Mbale surrendered this year, he expected to be shot. Instead, he found himself in a rehabilitation camp back in Rwanda. Rwanda is no paradise. Dissent is ruthlessly crushed and a quarter of the population still lives in poverty, albeit down from 40 percent a decade ago, according to the World Bank. Critics argue its government exaggerates the threat of the FDLR – whose numbers experts say are in the low thousands – to justify taking control of eastern Congo. But few deny Rwanda has made a genuine effort to heal the ethnic divisions between Hutus and Tutsis that led to the genocide. The government gave AFP access to its rehabilitation camp at Mutobo to show off the work it does. Set among lush mountainous vegetation, it has seen tens of thousands of Hutu fighters and their families pass through since it was established in 1997. New arrivals are first given a three-week "cooling off" period, said Cyprien Mudeyi, a retired army major who runs the camp. "They are very fearful because of the ideology they have been given. Progressively the fear is removed," he said.—App

UAE announces approval of National Encryption Policy

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates announced the approval of the National Encryption Policy and the issuance of its executive regulation, which calls on government entities to develop clear, well-defined, and officially approved transition plans from traditional encryption methods to post-quantum cryptography. The step aims to support a safer and more technologically prepared future amid the rapid advancements in quantum computing. This milestone reflects the vision and directives of the UAE's wise leadership to build a secure and modern digital infrastructure, reaffirming the nation's commitment to keeping pace with major technological transformations and anticipating future developments. It also strengthens the UAE's position as a global hub for artificial intelligence and digital innovation. According to this policy, the UAE Cybersecurity Council will continue to oversee the national migration efforts, working closely with government bodies to ensure the successful implementation of post-quantum encryption standards. The council aims to reinforce data protection and safeguard digital assets in accordance with the highest international best practices. Under its forward-looking leadership, the UAE, through the Cybersecu-

ty Council, is formulating comprehensive national strategies for post-quantum encryption, enhancing the country's readiness to confront emerging challenges and align with global advancements in this field. The UAE is now considered one of the leading nations worldwide in adopting and transitioning toward post-quantum encryption, driven by its proactive approach, sustained investment in advanced technologies, and commitment to building a secure and sustainable digital ecosystem. The UAE Cybersecurity Council is responsible for strengthening national information security, protecting data from unauthorised access, and proposing legislation, policies, and regulations related to encryption. It also sets forth procedures and standards to ensure proper implementation, with recommendations submitted to the National Security Advisor for approval. Furthermore, the council proposes mechanisms to mitigate the risks posed by quantum computing to sensitive systems with weak cryptographic components and prepares plans for the migration of these systems. It will conduct technical and analytical assessments to support government and private entities in evaluating the readiness and integrity of digital systems prior to wide-scale adoption

and deployment. These assessments also include evaluating the efficiency, quality, and preparedness of AI systems, applications, software, hardware, and technical components to ensure compliance with national and international standards. This enables both government and private institutions to obtain technical accreditation and validate their solutions with confidence. The council's services are structured around four main testing and verification pillars: AI reliability testing, software reliability testing, hardware reliability testing, and signal reliability testing. Dr. Mohammed Al-Kuwaiti, Head of Cybersecurity for the UAE government, stated that the approval of the National Encryption Policy and its executive regulation represents a major advancement in the national cybersecurity framework. He emphasised that this achievement reflects the leadership's commitment to strengthening the UAE's status as a trusted global hub for artificial intelligence and advanced technologies. He added that encryption and information security have become critical challenges for countries, institutions, and communities in the era of comprehensive digital transformation, highlighting the increasing reliance on secure and resilient digital infrastructure.—Agencies

Belarus, Myanmar sign memorandum of coop

MINSK: Myanmar will receive shipments of pharmaceutical products manufactured by the Belarusian companies Belmedpreparaty and Minskintercaps. The signing of the pharmaceutical agreements took place as part of the Belarusian-Myanmar business forum in Yangon, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Healthcare Ministry. The Healthcare Ministries of the two countries have signed a memorandum of understanding and cooperation in healthcare. In 2025, three delegations from Myanmar visited Belarus, touring Belarusian pharmaceutical plants and healthcare institutions. Cooperation on the supply of Belarusian medicines to Myanmar has been ongoing since 2018.

As noted at the forum, regular ministerial contacts have been established between the two countries, and the legal framework is being developed. During a meeting at the level of the two states' leaders, it was stated that Belarus and Myanmar are systematically deepening mutually beneficial and friendly relations, with the goal of increasing the prosperity of their citizens. The primary task now is to reinforce this high-level political engagement with solutions to specific economic and humanitarian challenges.—APP

Syria will build new 150,000 bpd oil refinery

DAMASCUS: Syria will build a new oil refinery with a capacity of 150,000 barrels per day, the Syrian energy minister told government-owned Ekhbariya television on Thursday.

The channel reported on Sunday that Syria's Baniyas refinery was operating at a reduced capacity of 95,000 bpd due to degradation in some of its facilities, and estimated the country's current total oil production capacity at around 130,000 bpd. Syria exported 380,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) in 2010, a year before protests against Bashar Assad's rule spiralled into a nearly 14-year war that devastated the country's economy and infrastructure – including oil production. Assad was toppled in December last year and the Islamist-led government that replaced him pledged to revive Syria's economy.—APP

Russia sentences eight to life for 2022 Crimean bridge blast

MOSCOW: A Russian court on Thursday jailed eight people for life over huge 2022 explosions that partially destroyed the Crimean bridge, an attack both Kyiv and Moscow said was organized by Ukraine's secret services. Five people were killed when the 19-kilometer (12-mile) bridge which links the Crimean Peninsula to Russia was hit by a truck bomb blast on October 8, 2022, eight months after Moscow attacked Ukraine. Kyiv later claimed responsibility for the blasts, saying they were aimed at hampering Moscow's logistics. The Crimean Peninsula – annexed by Russia in 2014 – has been a key supply route for Moscow's troops fighting in the south of Ukraine. "The defendants were found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment," Russia's southern military court in the city of Rostov-on-Don said on Telegram. The men were tried in a closed-door hearing at a military court. They have maintained their innocence throughout the trial and a lawyer told state media that the decision would be appealed. The bridge is seen by both Ukraine and Russia as a symbol of Moscow's 2014 seizure of the Crimean Peninsula.

President Vladimir Putin personally inaugurated the bridge, which links Russia to Crimea, in 2018 – even driving a truck across it. Moscow had maintained the crossing was safe despite the fighting, but it has been targeted repeatedly throughout the war. The men were charged with carrying out a "terrorist act" that caused death and illegally obtaining weapons as an organized group, the court said. Two were also charged with smuggling explosives.—APP

Drone strike hits Iraq gas complex, cuts supply

IRBIL, Iraq: A drone strike on Wednesday targeted an Emirati-owned gas complex in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, disrupting the gas supply to the region's power plants, local authorities said. "At 11:30 p.m. (2030 GMT), a drone attacked the Khor Mor gas field facility, cutting off all gas supplies to power plants," the regional natural resources and electricity authorities said in a statement. AFP correspondents in Kurdistan reported power cuts across the region, including in the city of Sulaimaniyah. The Khor Mor gas field lies between the cities of Kirkuk and Sulaimaniyah and supplies most of the Kurdistan region's power. Omed Ahmed, the regional electricity authority spokesperson, said the attack resulted in the loss of 2,600 megawatts of electricity, disrupting 80 percent of the region's power grid. Authorities said they were coordinating with the United Arab Emirates company Dana Gas to investigate the attack and restore operations. A local security source told AFP that the attack "targeted gas storage tanks, causing a major explosion and large fire." Iraq's Joint Operations Command, which coordinates between security forces and the military, said the attack, which set fire to a major storage tank, did not cause casualties. It added that the attack aims at "hindering security and economic stability" in a country that has just recently regained a sense of stability. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Long plagued by conflict, Iraq frequently suffers such attacks. Unclaimed Katyusha rocket and drone attacks have targeted the Khor Mor complex several times in recent years. In April 2024, four Yemeni workers were killed in a drone attack on the facility.—APP

Iran bans access to most forests

TEHRAN: Iranian authorities have imposed a temporary ban on public access to most forested areas, a local media outlet reported, as the country struggled to extinguish a fire in a UNESCO World Heritage-listed site. The fire in northern Iran's Hyrcanian forests, which started on Nov. 1, was brought under control in a few days. However, it reignited on Nov. 15, fueled by strong winds and an unusually severe drought, according to Iranian media. "We have notified the provinces to ban entry into forest areas outside protected zones and parks before the autumn rains occur in order to prevent similar incidents from occurring," Majid Zakariaei, commander of the unit responsible for forest protection, told the Mehr news agency. Iran has requested foreign assistance to combat the fire ravaging the Hyrcanian forests which stretch 1,000 km along the shores of the Caspian Sea and the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains into Azerbaijan. The ancient forests are home to the endangered Persian leopard as well as brown bears and other large predators and was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2019. The fire comes with the country facing one of its most severe droughts since records began six decades ago.—APP

Briefs

\$134.2M PGEP
launched to
fight poverty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah Thursday announced to launch a new Poverty Graduation and Economic Prosperity (PGEP) programme, a \$134.2 million initiative designed to expand proven poverty graduation interventions across the country and support extremely poor and flood-affected households. Speaking at a high-level seminar titled "Poverty Graduation: Pathways to Sustainable Livelihoods," the minister described PGEP as the next major step in Pakistan's poverty alleviation strategy, noting that the programme will promote long-term, sustainable livelihoods by providing productive assets, skills training, market linkages and interest-free finance to vulnerable families. The minister said the new programme builds directly on the success of the National Poverty Graduation Programme (NPGP), which he described as one of the most successful public-sector poverty graduation efforts in Pakistan. Implemented from 2017 to 2025 with financial and technical support from IFAD, NPGP provided integrated assistance across 21 districts and achieved what the Minister called truly transformative results.

Government
to hold final
PIA bidding
by mid-
December,
NA told

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The government plans to hold the final bidding for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) by mid-December, the Privatisation Division secretary told the National Assembly's standing committee on Wednesday. Briefing the panel chaired by MNA Farooq Sattar, the secretary said that four pre-qualified consortia are currently in the final stage of negotiations over commercial terms, The News reported. He said that talks are underway with the pre-qualified bidders on the share purchase and shareholders' agreements. Pre-bid qualification talks have been continuing for the past three days, while approval of the reserve price will be sought from the federal cabinet, the secretary said. In early July, the Privatisation Commission Board prequalified four bidders — Fauji Fertiliser Company Ltd, Air Blue (Pvt) Ltd, a consortium of Lucky Cement, Hub Power Holdings, Kohat Cement and Metro Ventures, and a consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation with Fatima Fertiliser, City Schools and Lake City Holdings. On November 7, the board approved the inclusion of AKD Group Holdings (Pvt) Ltd in the Arif Habib-led consortium.

Only
passengers
with incomplete
documents
being stopped:
FIA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amid prevailing rumours and speculations about alleged off-loading of passengers, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has issued a clarification on the issue saying that no passengers were being offloaded from flights. "No passenger is being offloaded at Lahore airport," said FIA Lahore Zone Director Captain (ret'd) Ali Zia, adding that the authority facilitates those passengers whose documents are legal and complete. "Even immigration authorities cannot stop you with legal documents," he remarked. The official, however, noted that only those passengers with incomplete documents were being stopped.

Jam-packed PNCA witnesses
stunning Russian folk show

Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Albert P. Khorev, who spoke on the occasion, warmly welcomed the audience and introduced the celebrated music group



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: A mesmerizing cultural evening was held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Wednesday as the Lyudmila Zykina Russian Folk Ensemble "RUSSIA" performed to a jam-packed hall, marking the 10th Russia-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission (IGC). A large number of diplomats, government officials, cultural figures and mu-

sic lovers attended the event, filling the PNCA auditorium to capacity. The concert was attended by the IGC Co-Chairs — Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilev along with senior officials from both countries. Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Albert P. Khorev, who spoke on the occasion, warmly welcomed the audience and introduced the celebrated music group. He highlighted the deep cultural significance of Russian folk traditions and expressed



hope that such exchanges would further strengthen the longstanding bilateral relationship between Russia and Pakistan. Ambassador Khorev noted that cultural diplomacy plays a vital role in bringing nations closer and reaffirmed Moscow's commitment to expanding cooperation in energy, trade, culture and people-to-people exchanges. The ensemble's performance received enthusiastic applause as the audience was immersed in vibrant melodies, tra-

ditional costumes and energetic choreography showcasing the richness of Russian folklore. The event, organized on the sidelines of the 10th Pakistan-Russia IGC, served as a reminder of the growing momentum in bilateral engagements and the shared desire to deepen collaboration across multiple sectors. The evening concluded with resounding appreciation for the artists and a renewed commitment by both sides to further cement cultural and diplomatic ties.

Train hits
China
railway
workers,
killing 11

BEIJING: A train hit railway workers in southwest China on Thursday, killing 11, local railway authorities said after the crash in Yunnan province. The train "used for seismic equipment testing" collided with construction workers at Kunming's Luoyang Town station in the early morning, killing 11 and injuring two, the Kunming Railway Bureau said in a statement. The train was "passing normally through a curve inside Kunming Luoyang Town Station when a collision happened with construction workers who had entered the track area", it said. The cause of the crash was under investigation, authorities added. Transportation had returned to normal by mid-day Thursday, with those injured receiving treatment, they said. Industrial accidents are fairly common in China due to vague regulations and lax safety standards. — APP

ECP notifies
five winners

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday formally notified the victory of five candidates elected to the National Assembly in the bye-elections held on November 23. According to the notification, all five seats were secured by nominees of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The successful candidates are Babar Nawaz Khan from NA 18 Haripur, Daniyal Ahmed from NA 104 Faisalabad, and Muhammad Numan from NA 129 Lahore. Muhammad Tufail from NA 143 Sahiwal and Mehmood Qadir Khan from NA 185 Dera Ghazi Khan. — APP

Security forces
gun down 22
terrorists in
DI Khan IBO

Sanitisation operation being
conducted to eliminate other
terrorists found in area, says ISPR

RAWALPINDI: The security forces have killed 22 India-backed terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Thursday. The terrorists, belonging to the Indian proxy, Fitna al-Khawarij, were gunned down during an intelligence-based operation (IBO), the military's media wing said in a statement. The ISPR's statement mentioned that a sanitisation operation was being conducted to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored terrorists found in the area. It reiterated that a relentless counter terrorism campaign under

vision "Azme-e-Istehkam" by security forces would continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country. Pakistan has witnessed an alarming 46% surge in overall violence in the third quarter (Q3) of 2025, as per the statistics issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS). The country reported at least 901 fatalities and 599 injuries, including civilians, security personnel and the terrorists, in a total of 329 incidents of violence, which also included terror attacks and counter-terror operations. The CRSS report highlights that by Q3, the ongoing year has proven nearly as deadly as all of 2024, with 2,414 fatalities recorded compared to the entire tally of 2024, which reported 2,546 deaths in total. Out of the total 901 fatalities in Q3, 516 (57%) were those of the outlaws, whereas there were 385 civilian and military martyrdoms. Further breakdown reveals that civilian deaths stood at 219 (24%), whereas 166 (18%) security personnel embraced martyrdom. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan — both of which share a porous border with neighbouring Afghanistan — faced the brunt of the terrorism incidents, accounting for more than 96% of the total violence across the country. KP was the worst-hit region, suffering nearly 71% (638) of the total violence-linked fatalities, and over 67% (221) of the incidents of violence, followed by Balochistan, with over 25% fatalities (230) and incidents (85). — Agencies

Chief Minister Afridi faces media
'character Assassination' drive

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi has come under increasing criticism from segments of the media allegedly aligned with the federal government, with some outlets accusing him of links to opium and hashish production in the province. The chief minister has so far refrained from responding to the allegations. However, while chairing a high-level meeting on Monday, he reiterated his government's commitment to "eradicating all forms of narcotics" from KP. According to an official statement, the chief minister directed law enforcement agencies to launch "effective and result-oriented action" against drug suppliers and manufacturers, terming the elimination of narcotics "a foremost priority" of his administration. He stressed that protecting youth from drug abuse was a "collective responsibility" and warned that

negligence in this regard would not be tolerated. Political observers note that narcotics cultivation particularly in Tirrahar valley, which connects Khyber, Orakzai and Kurram districts with Afghanistan's Nangarhar and Logar provinces—is not a new phenomenon. The region has historically witnessed poppy growth, with international attention intensifying during the Afghan war. Reports released by the US Task Force on Terrorism and Narcotics in 1989–90 had cited the involvement of various Afghan groups and some Pakistan-based individuals in narcotics production and trafficking. Later, a 1991–92 documentary by a German broadcaster also alleged the participation of certain regional politicians in the illicit trade. Afridi's supporters, PTI workers and members of the Afridi tribe have strongly reacted to the recent media narratives, terming them a "baseless and targeted campaign." A group of tribal youths also expressed concern over what they described as "a planned attempt to malign an entire community."

India says examining Bangladesh
request for Hasina's extradition

Ex-Bangladesh PM Hasina remains in hiding in India
since her autocratic rule was overthrown in August 2024

DNA

NEW DELHI: India is examining a request from Bangladesh for the extradition of the country's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Indian foreign ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday. The request — first made in December and reiterated this month after Hasina was sentenced to death for her role in the killing of student protesters last year — was being examined in India as part of ongoing internal judicial and legal processes, he said. Hasina fled to India in August 2024 at the height of the protests. Bangladesh's government said on Sunday it had asked New Delhi to extradite Hasina, 78, who has been in hiding in India since her autocratic rule was overthrown in August 2024. As prime minister, she had had New Delhi's

backing. Following the court ruling on Monday, convicting Hasina of crimes against humanity and sentencing her to death, the foreign ministry in Dhaka said in a statement that Delhi had an "obligatory responsibility" under a bilateral treaty to facilitate the former leader's return. Bangladesh has been in political turmoil since the end of Hasina's rule, and violence has marred campaigning for elections expected in February 2026. The United Nations said up to 1,400 people were killed in crackdowns as Hasina tried to cling to power, deaths that were central to her trial. India's past support for Hasina has frayed relations between the two neighbours since her overthrow. But tensions appear to have eased slightly when Bangladesh's National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman visited India this week for a regional security summit and met with his counterpart Ajit Doval. Media reports in Bangladesh said Rahman has invited Doval for a visit.

Flash floods leave 29 dead in
Indonesia's North Sumatra

The figures may rise as risk
assessment is still being carried
out," she told Xinhua by phone

JAKARTA: 29 people have been killed after flash floods and landslides struck multiple regencies and cities across Indonesia's North Sumatra province, a local official said on Thursday. Sri Wahyuni Pancasilawati, head of emergency handling, equipment, and logistics at the provincial Disaster Management and Mitigation Agency, said the disasters also left 67

people injured and nine others missing. "The total casualties are 29 people, with nine others missing. The figures may rise as risk assessment is still being carried out," she told Xinhua by phone. The disasters destroyed more than 400 houses, several bridges, and various public infrastructure facilities. Over 7,000 residents have been forced to flee their homes and take shelter, according to her. States of emergency have been declared in the regencies of Mandailing Natal, South Tapanuli, and North Tapanuli, she added.

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