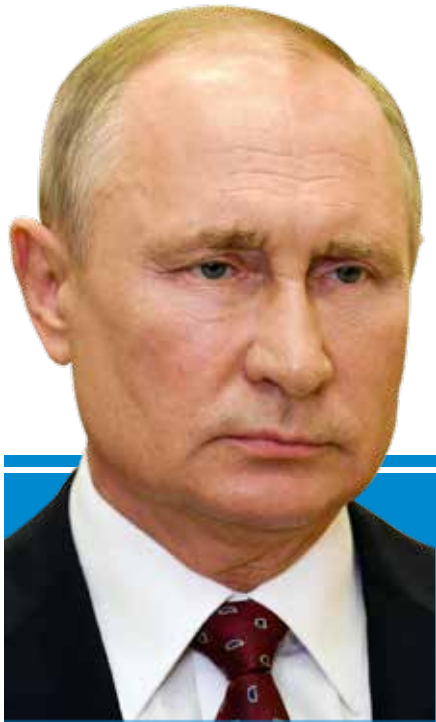




Saturday, November 29, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Russia not to
surrender areas
it has occupied

Detailed News On Page-08

Pakistan keen
to have GSP
status again

Detailed News On Page-08



Nigeria, Pak
agree to
boost ties

Detailed News On Page-07



Cross-border terrorism

Pakistan condemns killing of 3 Chinese workers in Tajikistan

As a neighbour that has repeatedly suffered terrorist attacks orchestrated from Afghan soil, the people of Pakistan fully understand and share the grief and anguish of our Chinese friends and Tajik partners

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday expressed its deepest condolences and strong solidarity with the government and people of China, as well as with the government and people of Tajikistan, over the loss of precious lives of three Chinese nationals in a heinous terrorist attack in Tajikistan near its border with Afghanistan. "Pakistan unequivocally condemns this cowardly attack on Chinese nationals. The use of armed drones in the incident underlines the gravity of threat emanating from Afghanistan and the brazenness of those behind it," a press statement issued by the Foreign Office Spokesperson said. The statement added that as a neighbour that has repeatedly suffered terrorist attacks orchestrated from Afghan soil, the people of Pakistan fully understand and share the grief and anguish of our Chinese friends and Tajik partners. Pakistan has consistently stressed that Afghan territory must not be used for terrorism against its neighbours or any other country. The repeated use of Afghan soil by terrorist elements and their continued presence under the patronage of Afghan Taliban regime, is a matter of serious

Pakistan condemns US shooting incident involving Afghan national

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday strongly condemned the shooting incident took place in Washington DC, reportedly involving an Afghan national. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the departed soldier, and wish the injured a swift and complete recovery. We also extend heartfelt sympathies to the families affected as well as to the Government and people of the United States," Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said in a statement. He said that the targeted attack was undoubtedly an act of terrorism and a heinous assault on soil of the United States. The spokesperson said that for the past two decades, Pakistan had endured countless similar terrorist incidents, with clear linkages to Afghanistan. This incident signifies the challenges posed by transnational terrorism and underscores the need for enhanced global cooperation to confront this menace, he added. He said that the incident heralded a troubling resurgence of terrorism on a global scale. "The international community must take note and reinvigorate collective efforts in counter-terrorism. Pakistan remains committed to working with the United States and the wider international community to address the shared challenge of terrorism," the spokesperson remarked. - APP

concern for the entire region and the wider international community. Concrete and verifiable action against the perpetrators, abettors, facilitators and financiers of terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil is the only

way to address this growing menace. Pakistan will continue to work closely with China, Tajikistan and other regional partners to promote peace, stability and security in our shared neighbourhood, the statement added.

DNA



ISLAMABAD: A monument honouring Yuri Gagarin – the first human to journey into space – was unveiled at Islamabad's F-9 Fatima Jinnah Park, marking a new chapter in Russia-Pakistan scientific and cultural cooperation. The ceremony was attended by Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev, Pakistan's Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Russian Ambassador Albert P. Khorev, Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, and Russian pilot-cosmonaut and Hero of Russia Elena Serova. - DNA

Yuri Gagarin monument unveiled in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A monument honouring Yuri Gagarin – the first human to journey into space – was unveiled on Wednesday at Islamabad's F-9 Fatima Jinnah Park, marking a new chapter in Russia-Pakistan scientific and cultural cooperation. The ceremony was attended by Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev, Pakistan's Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Russian Ambassador Albert P. Khorev, Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia Faisal Niaz Tirmizi,

Continued on Page 06

Putin to visit India on Dec 4

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to visit India on December 4-5 at the invitation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss bilateral ties and international issues, the Kremlin and India's Foreign Ministry said on Friday. During the state visit, Putin will hold talks with Modi and hold a separate meeting with Indian President Droupadi Murmu, the Kremlin said, saying a number of unspecified intergovernmental and commercial documents would be signed. Putin last went to India in December 2021, just a few months

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Trump vows to freeze migration from 'Third World Countries'

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Thursday his administration will "permanently pause" migration from all "Third World Countries", following an attack near the White House he attributed to Biden-era immigration vetting failures. Trump did not identify any countries by name or explain what he meant by third-world countries or "permanently pause". He said the plan would include cases approved under former President Joe Biden's administration. "I will permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the US system to fully recover, terminate all of the millions of Biden illegal admissions, including those signed by Sleepy Joe Biden's autopen, and remove anyone who is not a net asset to the United States," he said on his social media platform, Truth Social. Trump said he would end all federal benefits and subsidies for "non-citizens", adding he would "denaturalise migrants who undermine domestic tranquility" and deport any foreign national deemed a public charge, security risk, or "non-compatible with Western civilisation." White House and the US Citizenship and Immigration Services did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

Holiday Notice

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

PTI neglecting KP governance, focused on jailed leader: Tarar

Tarar added it was an attempt to damage the nation's reputation and urged PTI to abandon its anti-state narrative and misplaced priorities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Friday criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi for pursuing a political approach that, he said, neglects governance in the province. In a tweet, on his social media handle X, Tarar alleged that PTI's attention remains fixed on an unlawful demand – seeking political guidance from its founder imprisoned in Adiala Jail on a corruption conviction – rather than addressing the needs of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a practice he stressed violates prison rules. He added that despite Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's crucial role in the country's fight against terrorism, the provincial leadership has ignored peace,

Continued on Page 06



KP CM calls off sit-in on Adiala Road

Aleema Khan files contempt plea against Adiala jail superintendent

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI : Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi has ended the 16-hour-long sit-in staged on Adiala Road, saying that authorities have still not provided any information regarding the well-being of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) jailed founder Imran Khan. Speaking to journalists at the Gorkhpur checkpoint on Friday, CM Afridi said that workers spent

Continued on Page 06

Field Marshal Asim Munir assumes unified COAS-CDF title

Under the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, COAS will concurrently serve as CDF for five years

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir will be officially addressed as Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) concurrently the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) with effect from Friday. The change will be mentioned in all official papers, military references and media reports with the unified office of Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff. The unification of the title comes as President Asif Ali Zardari, on November 15, gave his assent to the Pakistan Army, Air Force and Navy Amendment Bills 2025 following their approval by parliament. Under the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, the COAS will concurrently serve as Chief of the Defence Forces for five years. Field Marshal Munir's tenure will restart from the date the new notification is issued. Article 243 provisions applicable to a Field Marshal will also apply to a General promoted to the rank. The federal government may



authorise the vice chief of army staff or deputy chief of army staff to exercise powers of the COAS, under written orders issued on the CDF's recommendation. The legislation further clarified that once the first notification for the dual office is issued, the incumbent COAS' tenure will be deemed to have commenced from the date of that notification. The federal government will now determine the duties and responsibilities of the CDF, including multi-domain integration, restructuring and ensuring jointness across the armed forces. A major structural change approved in the bill is the abolition of the post of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), to be replaced by the Commander of the National Strategic Command. The prime minister may appoint the commander from among serving Pakistan Army generals for a three-year term, on the COAS/CDF's recommendation. Also, the post of the CJCSC has ceased to exist under the 27th Constitutional Amendment – with General (retd) Sahir Shamshad Mirza retiring on Wednesday as the country's last CJCSC.

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Sindh CM launches CRMS Mobile App

To remove this barrier, the Sindh cabinet decided that the provincial government will bear all NADRA fees for birth and death registrations,” he said, adding that NADRA had cooperated extensively with the province on this reform

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah launched the Civil Registration Management System (CRMS) Mobile Application to bring birth, death, marriage, and divorce registration services directly to citizens’ doorsteps through a seamless, paperless, and technology-driven platform. The broader Electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (E-CRVS) system, approved with a budget of Rs 471.254 million. It would cover 30 districts and 769 health facilities to ensure digital registration of 85 per cent of births at public and private hospitals, the CM said. He added, “The immunisation, disease surveillance, and patient identity management would also be connected with the CRMS,” he said and added, “This is a major milestone in the provincial government’s ongoing transition towards Digital Sindh.” Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, the chief minister said the Sindh government was fully committed to digitalising governance processes to enhance transparency, efficiency, and public convenience. “This launch is a significant step in our shift from paper-based to technology-driven governance. The CRMS Mobile App promotes transparency, efficiency, accessibility, and public trust, highlighting Sindh’s leadership in digital governance for the benefit of all citizens,” he said. Shah noted that all proceedings of the Sindh Cabinet had already been fully digitalised. Birth and death registration coverage, however, had remained low for years, largely because many low-income families could not afford NADRA’s registration fees. “To remove this barrier, the Sindh cabinet decided that

the provincial government will bear all NADRA fees for birth and death registrations,” he said, adding that NADRA had cooperated extensively with the province on this reform. The CRMS Mobile App, developed in collaboration with NADRA, is designed to eliminate long queues, paperwork, and delays. It allows citizens especially those in remote or marginalised communities to register vital events without visiting government offices. The system provides accurate, single-source digital records integrated with provincial databases. The chief minister said that accurate and timely civil registration would now enable real-time census data, improving the government’s capacity for evidence-based planning. “Initiatives such as online address change are now a critical need of the time,” he remarked. Murad Ali Shah announced that birth registration immediately after childbirth would soon become mandatory across Sindh. “Five years from now, school planning for every child will be based on this data,” he said, directing that hospitals register each newborn immediately at birth. He added that implementation at the union council level was the most crucial stage of the reform and instructed that UC representatives’ performance be evaluated based on registration rates. The chief minister highlighted the importance of the new system for the health sector, particularly in immunisation, disease surveillance, and patient identity management. The integrated data would support programmes such as the Electronic Immunisation Registry and enable

targeted interventions for diseases such as thalassemia. The Chief Minister stated that the comprehensive Electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (E-CRVS) system, approved with a budget of Rs 471.254 million, will cover 30 districts and 769 health facilities to ensure the digital registration of 85 per cent of births at both public and private hospitals. Murad Ali Shah highlighted the provincial government’s strong partnership with NADRA, noting its role in setting national standards through solutions like PakID. He reaffirmed Sindh’s dedication to expanding digital reforms to include services such as domicile issuance, social protection systems, health records, licensing, and e-payments, all under a unified and secure digital platform. “The Sindh government is committed to improving public convenience through digital reforms,” he said, expressing gratitude to the NADRA chairman and his team for their cooperation. Minister of Health Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho informed the Chief Minister about the 769 health facilities where digital registration of 85 per cent of births at public and private hospitals will be carried out through the app. Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah stated that the Chief Minister’s Digital Sindh program will ensure both transparency and accuracy. DG NADRA Amir Ali Khan provided a comprehensive briefing to the Chief Minister on the app and its features. A formal Agreement Addendum for the deployment of the CRMS Mobile Application was also signed at the event between the Local Government Department and NADRA.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani meets Ms. Ina Lepel, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan, at Parliament House.

Weekly inflation rises 0.73pc

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), increased by 0.73 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on November 27, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review was recorded at 337.99 points, up from 335.54 points last week. On a year-on-year basis, the SPI rose by 4.32 percent. The weekly SPI (base year 2015-16-100) covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. For the lowest consumption group (up to Rs17,732), the SPI decreased by 0.09 percent, falling to 330.88 points from 331.17 points last week. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs17,733-22,888; Rs22,889-29,517; Rs29,518-44,175; and above Rs44,175 increased by 0.99 percent, 0.49 percent, 0.28 percent, and 0.60 percent, respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 14 (27.45%) items increased, 12 (23.53%) decreased, and 25 (49.02%) remained unchanged. Major commodities registering an increase during the week included electricity charges for Q1 (11.11%), LPG (3.51%), pulse moong (1.92%), vegetable ghee 2.5-kg (1.12%), bananas (0.65%), cooking oil 5-litre (0.64%), powdered milk (0.43%), vegetable ghee 1-kg (0.38%), cigarettes (0.25%), firewood (0.20%), sugar (0.20%) and beef (0.01%).—APP

Efforts afoot to implement E-Stamp Paper System

ISLAMABAD: Significant progress has been achieved regarding the implementation of the E-Stamp Paper system, in line with the Digital Islamabad Vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi. According to details, several stages related to the issuance of E-Stamp Paper have been completed under the agreement between the Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA) and the ICT Administration. In line with the instructions of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, E-Stamp Paper system has been integrated with One-Link. The State Bank of

Pakistan has also formally granted authorization to link the E-Stamp Paper system developed by PLRA with OneLink system, serving as the country’s largest payment for digital transactions. In this regard, PLRA has also shared the design sample of the E-Stamp with the ICT Administration. In the next phase, PLRA is commencing the testing phase of the E-Stamp system concerning the digitized land records of 24 mouzas of the ICT. Following the testing phase, the complete E-Stamp Paper system will be launched soon in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that the

E-Stamp Paper system, in accordance with the Digital Islamabad Vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, will also promote a cashless economy in Islamabad. He said that it will also facilitate citizens in transactions related to property transfer, inheritance, buying and selling, etc. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad said that the aim of these measures is to adopt an e-governance model and further improve service delivery in Islamabad. He further said that all resources are being utilized to ensure the provision of better and the best facilities to citizens.—APP

Punjab launches free residential plot scheme, says Azma

LAHORE :Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari has said that after providing free cancer medicines, the Punjab government has now begun allotting free residential plots to deserving citizens, reflecting Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s strong welfare-oriented vision. Talking to the media outside the Punjab Assembly building on Friday, she said the overwhelming success of the “Apni Chhat Apna Ghar” initiative had encouraged the Punjab government to introduce the new “Apni Zameen Apna Ghar” project aimed at helping low-income families secure home ownership at the earliest.

Azma Bokhari said that PML-N leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz personally telephoned the lucky recipients of free plots to congratulate them, demonstrating the government’s transparency and people-friendly approach. She added that 120,000 houses are currently under construction, while the five-year target stands at 500,000 homes — marking the beginning of “a new era of housing development in Punjab.” Criticising the political opposition, she said the PML-N’s manifesto has always centred on public service, in contrast to PTI, which she claimed “has nothing to offer except protests and agitation.—APP

Kundi opens 12th ISEM exhibition

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday inaugurated the three-day 12th ISEM Pakistan Solar Energy Exhibition in Peshawar. Upon his arrival, he was received by Country Manager Khawaja Wahaj-ul-Haq and other organizers. The exhibition features a large number of national and international companies, energy specialists, technology experts and industry leaders. The Governor visited various stalls where he was briefed on solar technology, modern energy solutions, green-energy equipment and the latest developments in the renewa-

ble energy sector. Governor Kundi said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has vast potential for the promotion of solar energy, and such exhibitions not only attract investment but also create new opportunities for youth and the business community. He added that the government is taking policy-level measures to promote renewable energy to move towards an environmentally friendly, low-cost and sustainable energy future. The exhibition organizers thanked the Governor for his visit and encouragement to industry representatives, participants and investors,

and presented him with a shield. Moreover, Senior Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, former JI Ameer Sirajul Haq and Provincial Ameer for North Inayatullah Khan, called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House here on Friday. During the meeting, matters related to law and order, political dynamics and administrative affairs of the province were discussed. The two sides also exchanged views on ensuring sustainable peace in KP and pursuing collective efforts for securing the province’s constitutional rights.—APP

Shaza highlights cyber shield policy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja has said that the newly launched Cyber Shield Policy will provide comprehensive protection to e-governance systems, the financial sector, and health-related data. She added that the government is actively encouraging private-sector investment under the Digital Nation Pakistan initiative. The minister was addressing an event titled “Cybersecurity, Cyber Shield Policy and the Future,” where she described the Cyber Shield Policy as a major milestone in strengthening the country’s digital defence. She said the policy marks a new era in Pakistan’s cybersecurity landscape, offering a unified security framework for both public and private institutions. Shaza Fatima Khawaja underscored the growing scale of digital threats, noting that cybersecurity can no longer be overlooked. She said the Cyber Shield Policy will ensure enhanced protection for critical digital systems and safeguard sensitive national data. Acknowledging the support of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), she praised the role of Pakistani youth in defending the country’s digital borders during the recent conflict, adding that their technological skills have earned global recognition. The minister emphasized that cybersecurity has become a matter of national security and that new opportunities are being created for young professionals in this field. Earlier, speaking at another ceremony, the minister said Pakistan’s IT sector is progressing rapidly and offers vast opportunities for investment. She stated that the Digital Nation Pakistan initiative aims to achieve nationwide digitalization, and that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is personally supervising the country’s digital transformation. Shaza Fatima Khawaja further said that the government is promoting private-sector investment in line with its digital vision. She noted that the National Artificial Intelligence Policy has been introduced to support AI-driven companies and products. She added that the government is taking all necessary steps to facilitate youth in the IT sector and that these efforts have contributed to an increase in Pakistan’s IT exports.—DNA

ISSI launches book on Post-5 August 2019 IOJK

ISLAMABAD: The India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has launched its latest edited volume, titled: “The Kashmir Question in a Changing World – Beyond August 2019. Featuring 12 chapters contributed by renowned academics and scholars from Pakistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, as well as abroad, the book focuses on various dimensions of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and challenges the narratives advanced by India on the subject. Prominent Kashmiri leader Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. Other speakers included: Dr. Waleed Rasool, Assistant Professor, Riphah International University; Mr. Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman, Kashmir Institute of International Relations, Islamabad; and Ambassador Babar Amin, a career diplomat. Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai commended the ISSI’s efforts in publishing the book, noting that most of the books available in the market were either written by Indian authors or foreign scholars, with many tending to lean more towards the Indian narrative. They completely ignore the suffering and pain of the Kashmiri people. Kashmiri voices have been conspicuously missing from the literary landscape on the conflict.

The book published by the India Study Centre has done an excellent job by including contributions from a number of Kashmiri writers who have aptly highlighted the lived experience of the Kashmiri people. Dr. Fai said that for many scholars, particularly those hailing from foreign countries, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was a territorial dispute. However, the reality is that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is about the aspirations of millions of Kashmiri people. He went on to explain the role of diaspora in highlighting the case of Jammu and Kashmir that influenced almost all U.S. Administrations over almost eight decades. Dr. Fai also underlined that the world recognises the international legitimacy of the Kashmir case and has empathy for the Kashmir cause. It was important to channelise these assets through strong advocacy and diplomatic moves. He expressed profound gratitude for the all-out support and solidarity extended by the Pakistani nation throughout the Kashmiri struggle. Earlier, in his remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood said that the ISC book being launched serves as a lens through which the lived reality of the Kashmiri people could be viewed. It maps India’s repugnant poli-

cies and their unspeakable consequences for the Kashmiri people in the aftermath of New Delhi’s illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019. It illustrates a pattern of systematic denial of rights, political manipulation, and demographic engineering aimed at implementing a settler-colonial project. It repudiates the spurious arguments advanced by India to justify its unjustifiable actions as well as its false narratives of ‘development’ and ‘normalcy’ crafted to mislead the international community. He said that over the years, the gross and systematic violations of human rights of Kashmiris by Indian security forces have been extensively documented. Unabated state-sponsored oppression is exacerbated by continuous attempts at demographic engineering, cultural suppression, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests of political leadership, specific targeting of the Kashmiri youth, crackdown on journalists and human rights workers, frequent occurrence of collective punishment, and economic subjugation. Many of these issues have been raised in the latest report released by the United Nations Special Procedures Mandate Holders about the situation since the Pahalgalam attack on 22 April 2025. —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

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Independence Day

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Nov 28/Albania
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Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ICCI President pledges full support for businesses’ growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A thirty member delegation of the Traders Welfare Association, F-10 Markaz, led by its President Ahmad Khan, paid a visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and briefed the Chamber’s leadership about the pressing challenges confronting the local business community. During the meeting, the delegation highlighted key concerns related to civic amenities, infrastructure gaps, and facilitation issues that continue to hinder a smooth and business-friendly environment in F-10 Markaz. They urged ICCI to take up these matters with the relevant departments for timely redressal. Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President ICCI, gave a patient hearing to the delegation and reaffirmed the Chamber’s unwavering commitment to safeguarding the interests of the business community across the Capital. He assured that all issues raised by the delegation would be formally taken up with the concerned authorities for prompt action. He emphasized that a conducive business ecosystem is vital for boosting trade and economic activities, and ICCI is fully focused on working in close coordination with stakeholders to resolve their genuine grievances. ICCI Council Member Zubair Ahmed Malik underscored the significance of unity among the community for the attainment of the objectives for the ease of business. ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub said that the Chamber is actively pursuing various initiatives aimed at improving the overall business environment in Islamabad. He assured the delegation that ICCI would continue advocating for better civic infrastructure and greater government facilitation. Vice President Mohammad Ifan Chaudhry also spoke on the occasion, stressing the need for collaborative efforts between traders, community representatives, and government departments to ensure sustainable improvements in commercial areas. He highlighted ICCI’s ongoing efforts to engage with relevant institutions for practical and long-term solutions. The key issues highlighted by the Traders Welfare Association included infrastructure development, sewerage and sanitation, encroachments, security concerns, and taxation and regulatory challenges that traders of F-10 Markaz face on a daily basis. Those shared their insights included Malik Naeem Iqbal, Rana Ifitikhar, Akbar Siddique, Rizwan Abbasi, Raja Abdul Majeed, Tariq Mughal, Rana Shehzad and ICCI former SVP Khalid Chaudhry. Prominent attendees included former President Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, Executive Members Waseem Chaudhry, Ishaq Sial, Mohammad Imran Minhas, Zulqurnain Abbasi, The delegation thanked the ICCI leadership for their support and expressed confidence that the Chamber’s intervention would help mitigate the difficulties being encountered by the business community of F-10 Markaz.

PAA begins work on new ATC tower, fire station at Karachi airport

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) has initiated a major infrastructure upgrade at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, launching the development of a new state-of-the-art Air Traffic Control (ATC) Tower and a modern Rescue and Fire Fighting Station (RFFS). The project is aimed at strengthening air traffic management, enhancing operational safety, and improving emergency response capabilities at the country’s busiest airport. According to officials, the design phase is expected to be completed within six months, followed by a 24-month construction timeline. The facilities will be designed and constructed by MM Pakistan in a joint venture with Spain-based CEMOSA and Fairbanks Architects, bringing international expertise in airport planning and Communication, Navigation and Surveillance/Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) systems.—APP

Pakistan participating in Fajr Film Festival in Iran

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani film delegation is taking part for the first time in the 43rd Fajr Film Festival, being held from November 26 to December 2 in Shiraz, Iran, according to a press statement issued on Friday. Federal Minister for Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi is attending the event. Three Pakistani films, Taxali Gate, Umro Ayyar: A New Beginning and Actor in Law, will be screened at the festival. The Fajr Film Festival is considered one of the world’s major film events, drawing leading filmmakers, actors and producers from around the globe. Pakistani filmmakers and actors are also participating this year, gaining an opportunity to share their work and experiences on an international platform.

Woman-led entrepreneurship avenues explored

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI), Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, held an important meeting with the Chairperson of NAVTCC Ms. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, the executive director of PODA, Ms. Sameena Nazir and renowned artist Asmaa Zia, here Friday. The meeting highlighted the pivotal role of women in Pakistan’s socio-economic development, explored avenues for woman-led entrepreneurship and skill-based investment, and marked the purchase of an original painting – to be contributed toward a charity initiative, said a release issued here. Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh emphasized boosting women’s participation in the formal economy, from skilled labour to entrepreneurship. Chairperson NAVTCC briefed Minister that being Pakistan’s apex body for Vocational Training and skill

building, NAVTCC is mandated to bridge the skill-gap and create employment opportunities specially for women. By purchasing a painting by Artist Asmaa Zia, the Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh signalled that art can serve a dual purpose, as cultural enrichment and as an asset class contributing to social good. The painting will be donated to charity, creating a model of socially responsible investing. Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh noted that women-led enterprises –whether through skilled trades, creative industries, or small businesses, represent a vital investment opportunity. “When women succeed, economies grow – and so does national prosperity,” he said. Ms. Sameena Nazir, Executive Director PODA, welcomed the initiative and said, “This marks an important step in recognizing that women’s em-

powerment is not just a social cause, it is an economic imperative”. Artist Asmaa Zia said she was honored to contribute her art to a charitable cause that advances women’s economic empowerment. The minister highlighted that the government has already removed 80 percent of unnecessary restrictions on the business community and successfully passed the Aasaan Karobar Act Bill from the National Assembly to improve the business climate. This would highly benefit women owned businesses investment opportunities. This meeting signals a fresh, integrated approach to women’s empowerment in Pakistan. Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh reaffirmed that the Board of Investment remains fully committed to promoting investment and facilitating sustainable economic development across Pakistan.—APP

Fruits worth \$130m, vegetables \$53.693m exported in 04 months

ISLAMABAD: The exports of fresh fruits from the country during the first four months of current financial year increased by 11.78 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-October 2025, over 202,825 metric tons of fruits worth of \$130.894 million were exported as compared to the exports of 191,811 metric tons valuing \$116.650 million of the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Meanwhile, country earned \$53.693 million by exporting over 182,293 metric tons of vegetables, which were recorded at 285,892 metric tons and valued at \$91.22 million of the same period of the last year. However, the exports of the vegetables went down by 41.08 per cent in first four months of the current financial year as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-October 2025, about 57,017 metric tons of fish and fish preparations valued at \$130.976 million were exported as compared to the exports of 54,119 metric tons worth of \$116.114 million of the same period of the last year. The exports of fish and fish preparations grew by 12.80 per cent during the period under review as compared to the exports of the same period of the last year. On the other hand, 37,776 metric tons of meat and meat preparations valued at \$170.209 million were also exported as compared to the exports of 37,299 metric tons as against the exports of \$160.135 million of the same period of last year. It is worth mentioning here that country’s merchandise exports reached to \$10.448 billion during the first four months (July–October) of the current fiscal year (2025–26). On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country increased by 14.01 percent when compared to \$2,499 billion during September 2025. The imports grew by 3.57 percent compared to \$5.848 billion in September 2025, PBS reported.— APP

President grieved over loss of lives in Sri Lanka floods, landslides

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and widespread damage to properties caused by floods and landslides in Sri Lanka following days of heavy rainfall. The president, in a message of condolence, conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families and those affected by the disaster. He noted with concern reports indicating significant casualties, with dozens of people having lost their lives and many others still missing. President Zardari said that Pakistan stood in solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka during this difficult time, as rescue and relief op-

erations continued across several districts amid ongoing weather challenges. Highlighting the broader context of such disasters, the president observed that climate change was a reality impacting countries of the Global South more severely, despite their limited contribution to the factors driving that change. He said nations like Pakistan and Sri Lanka were increasingly facing extreme weather events placing immense pressure on lives, livelihoods, and public resources. President Zardari noted that Pakistan, which has itself suffered heavily from the effects of climate change, believed there was an urgent need

for collective efforts. He emphasised the importance of working together not only to support affected countries in times of crisis, but also to develop shared strategies focused on resilience, preparedness and mitigation. The president also conveyed his condolences to the President of Sri Lanka, Anura Kumara Dissanayake and expressed support for the government and people of Sri Lanka as they respond to the humanitarian impact of the floods and landslides. He prayed for the departed souls, for strength for the bereaved families, and for the safe recovery of those still missing.—APP

DPM, IFAC President discuss financial governance

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar @MlshaqDar50 received Jean Bouquot, President of International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) & welcomed him to Pakistan. He underscored the critical role of the

accountancy profession in strengthening financial governance and transparency, and in equipping Pakistan to meet modern challenges, including AI-driven transformation. The DPM/FM appreciated the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) and highlighted ongoing co-

operation with IFAC to enhance audit quality, support SMEs, and strengthen ethics and sustainability reporting. He emphasised the importance of preparing Pakistani professionals for emerging global standards and technological shifts through deeper collaboration with IFAC.—DNA

Land dispute doesn’t end even after death

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ruled that a land-grab dispute does not end with the death of the accused, directing the Peshawar High Court to re-adjudicate the matter in accordance with the law. According to the court’s officially approved detailed judgment for reporting, the Supreme Court partially set aside the Peshawar High Court’s Abbottabad Bench ruling dated March 21, 2022, and ordered a fresh examination of the question of restoring possession of the disputed land. Justice Ahsan Ishtiaq Ibrahim authored the judgment on behalf of the three-member bench, observing that illegal occupation of land is a matter that does not conclude with a criminal conviction, as its civil consequences continue. Therefore, even after the death of the accused, the appeal regarding restoration of possession remains maintainable. The complainant, Advocate Muhammad Khurshid Khan, had filed a case under the Illegal Dispossession Act, 2005, alleging unlawful occupation of his 11-marla property. In 2015, the trial court sentenced the accused, Dost Muhammad Khan, to three years in prison but released him on probation due to his age and health, while also directing him to return possession of the land within one month. Four co-accused were acquitted. During the pendency of the appeal, Dost Muhammad Khan passed away, resulting in the automatic abatement of the appeal against the prison sentence. However, the Supreme Court held that the issue of restoring possession remains alive under the law and cannot be ignored. The apex court noted that the 2005 Act is a special law that provides landowners with immediate protection and an effective mechanism for reclaiming possession. While criminal proceedings abate upon an accused’s death, this principle does not apply to civil consequences such as restoration of possession. Under the law, the order to vacate the land can be enforced against the deceased’s legal heirs or any person claiming through him. The Supreme Court instructed the High Court to hear the legal heirs of the deceased and re-examine the question of possession. It upheld the plea seeking enhancement of the sentence but set aside the portion of the High Court’s judgment relating to restoration of possession, remanding that part of the case back to the Peshawar High Court for fresh consideration.—DNA

21 illegally occupied properties restored to real owners

RAWALPINDI: The district administration and the police have retrieved 21 illegally occupied properties across Rawalpindi during the past week. This was stated in a meeting held on Friday to review the implementation of the Punjab Protection of Immovable Properties Ordinance. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani, Deputy Commissioner Hassan Waqar Cheema, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue), and assistant commissioners attended the meeting. According to a spokesman for the Rawalpindi Police, all 21 cases of unlawful occupation taken up during the week were resolved and possession was handed back to the rightful owners. He said that, in line with the Punjab chief minister’s instructions, coordinated efforts between the district administration and the police were ensuring swift resolution of disputes relating to encroachment and property rights. The citizens whose long-standing complaints were addressed expressed gratitude to the Punjab chief minister and the concerned officers for what they termed timely and fair action. The spokesman added that citizens seeking quick and impartial resolution of their property-related issues could submit applications at the special cell set up in the Deputy Commissioner’s Office.—DNA

Briefs

EU, FAO conclude successful SRAS project in Sindh

ISLAMABAD: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Union (EU), in collaboration with the Government of Sindh, have successfully completed the Strengthening Resilience of Agro-Pastoralists in Sindh (SRAS) project. The four-year, EUR 3 million initiative has enhanced food security and resilience for 48,205 smallholder farming households, benefiting over 200,000 people in Umerkot and Tharparkar. The project achieved significant milestones, including providing productive subsidies to 14,000 households, vaccinating 705,000 live-stock, and training 8,970 farmers through Livestock Farmer and Agro-pastoral Field Schools. Additionally, 10 Producer Marketing Groups were established, and 14,423 hectares of agriculture land and 700 acres of rangeland were restored. EU Ambassador to Pakistan, Raimundas Karoblis, highlighted the EU's commitment to supporting climate resilience and rural development in Sindh. FAO Pakistan's Officer-in-Charge, James Okoth, praised the strong partnership behind the project, while the Government of Sindh reaffirmed its commitment to sustaining the practices introduced through SRAS.—APP

Pakistan-Romania ties based on mutual respect, says Kundi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi attended the National Day reception of Romania held in Islamabad, where he congratulated Romanian Ambassador Dr. Dan Stoenescu and the people of Romania on behalf of himself and the people. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kundi said that Pakistan and Romania enjoy friendly relations, and the peoples of both countries are bound together by mutual respect and goodwill. The ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, ambassadors from various countries, as well as prominent political and business figures.—APP

Aleem meets Turkiye trade minister on 5th ECO Ministerial summit

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan, met with Türkiye's Minister of Trade, Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat, on the sidelines of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade, held in Istanbul. During the meeting, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan highlighted the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Türkiye and expressed satisfaction over the growing, multifaceted cooperation between the two countries. He emphasized the immense potential for enhancing bilateral trade and noted that both sides agreed to work closely to increase the trade volume to up to USD 5 billion in the coming years. He reiterated Pakistan's strong commitment to expanding economic, trade, and investment ties with Türkiye. Both sides also exchanged views on various issues of mutual interest and agreed to work together across all sectors for further strengthening bilateral relations. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan congratulated the Turkish Trade Minister on the successful hosting and organization of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting, appreciating Türkiye's efforts in promoting regional trade and cooperation. He also urged the Turkish side to consider increasing the import of Pakistani meat and rice, highlighting that Pakistan offers high-quality, more reasonable, and competitive prices.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Students presenting a cultural show on the occasion of the inauguration of the Indonesian corner at the Pakistan National Library. DNA

NUML students demonstrate business potential at Gala event

The DG NUML also acknowledged the hard work of the organizing team and students, stating that events like the Entrepreneurship Gala foster healthy competition, teamwork, and business planning skills among learners

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Department of Management Sciences, National University of Modern Languages (NUML) organised the Entrepreneurship Gala 2025; an engaging platform where students showcased their creativity, business acumen, and entrepreneurial potential. This year's gala featured 56 innovative stalls, displaying a diverse range of products and services, from food items and handcrafted jewelry to unique ideas and exciting business concepts. Muhammad Omais Khattak, Chair GSEA (Global Students Entrepreneur Awards), Entrepreneurs Organization (Islamabad Chapter), graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and inaugurated the event. Speaking on the occasion, he appreciated NUML continuous efforts in providing students with practical, experience-based learning opportunities. He highlighted that such initiatives play a crucial role in motivating youth to take part in productive activities, helping them refine and present their entrepreneurial abilities. He further emphasized that hands-on exposure at the university level equips students with real-world business insight and confidence to pursue future ventures. Rector NUML, Maj Gen (r) Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M), along with the Chief Guest, Director General NUML, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, Dean Management Sciences, faculty members, and senior officials, visited the student stalls. The Rector commended the creativity, innovation, and demonstration of the students, adding that NUML remains committed to nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship, critical thinking, and problem-solving among students to prepare them for modern-day professional challenges.

es. He appreciated the efforts of the faculty in organizing the gala and encouraged students to continue exploring new ideas and translating them into viable business models. The DG NUML also acknowledged the



hard work of the organizing team and students, stating that events like the Entrepreneurship Gala foster healthy competition, teamwork, and business planning skills among learners.

Rina Saeed hires top lawyer as FIA probe intensifies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: So-called climate activist Rina Saeed Khan, widely known for her role in the Supreme Court case that led to the closure of Islamabad's iconic Monal Restaurant, has hired one of the country's top legal minds to defend herself in an ongoing FIA investigation. According to official documents, Khan has submitted a power of attorney authorizing Barrister Salman Safdar, Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan, to represent her in all legal proceedings related to the inquiry. The document grants the counsel full authority to appear, plead, file applications, receive records, and pursue all necessary legal remedies. Sources familiar with the matter say Khan's decision to hire a high-priced, top-tier lawyer has raised eyebrows in various quarters. Critics allege that her move reflects concerns that the FIA inquiry could lead to serious legal challenges. Some officials claim that Khan may be attempting to "shield herself from possible financial misconduct findings"—allegations she has consistently rejected. According to individuals close to the FIA investigation, the probe revolves around claims of financial irregularities during her association with wildlife-related projects. Some in-

siders allege that donor-funded initiatives suffered major setbacks due to mismanagement and improper financial transfers. These accusations are currently under review by investigators. Rina Saeed Khan figures during environmental petitions before the Supreme Court that contributed to the decision to shut down Monal Restaurant, once considered a major cultural and tourism landmark of the capital. While environmental groups hailed the ruling as a win for conservation of the Margalla Hills National Park, large segments of the public, business community, and civic groups strongly opposed the closure. Many accused environmental activists—including Khan—of exercising undue influence and using personal connections to secure the verdict. The decision, delivered during the tenure of then-Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, sparked intense debate about the balance between environmental protection and tourism development. It may be added that several other commercial establishments also operate in the area commonly referred to as the National Park Zone. However, only Monal and La Montana were proceeded against. During the Supreme Court hearings, this point was also mentioned, with some stakeholders questioning why action was limited to selected properties while others remained untouched. Therefore, targeting Monal and La Montana allegedly indicates personal grudge on the part of Rina Khan and her like-minded friends.

Govt details steps for tourism promotion in Chitral

ISLAMABAD: The Senate was informed on Friday that the federal government has taken multiple measures—prior to and following devolution—to support the promotion of tourism in Chitral, though the primary responsibility now rests with the provinces. Responding to a question raised by Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry told the House that after the 18th Constitutional Amendment, tourism was devolved to provincial

governments, making the development and promotion of tourist destinations the mandate of the respective provinces. The minister said the federal cabinet had approved the restructuring of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) in May 2019, after which—effective July 2020—all PTDC properties were handed over to the provinces, including those located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Before restructuring, PTDC had been operating five lodging facilities in Chitral Valley, situated

in Chitral city, Bumburet, Mastuj, Booni and Birmoglasht, aimed at providing affordable accommodation for travellers. PTDC had also been running a Tourist Facilitation Centre in Chitral to assist both domestic and foreign visitors. Dr Chaudhry said that in order to ensure continued promotion of the region, PTDC had highlighted Chitral Valley at major international tourism exhibitions including World Travel Mart (WTM) London, ITB Berlin, and the Travel & Adventure Show in New York,

in collaboration with provincial tourism departments and tour operators. He added that PTDC, in partnership with the Sustainable Tourism Foundation Pakistan (STFP), had developed dedicated tourism websites—www.tourism.gov.pk and www.visit-chitralvalley.com—to assist visitors. The platforms provide essential information such as travel routes, accommodation options, tourist attractions, local cuisine, handicrafts, and details of regional fairs and festivals.—APP

Two drug peddlers get 14 years imprisonment

RAWALPINDI: Two drug suppliers were convicted by local courts on Thursday, awarding a total of 14 years imprisonment and imposing fines amounting to Rs120,000.0 on the accused. In the first case, Amjad Khan was sentenced to nine years in jail and fined Rs80,000.0. He was arrested by Gujar Khan Police in November 2023 when 2 kg and 160 grams of charas were recovered from him. Kabir Hussain in another case, was awarded five years imprisonment and a fine of Rs40,000.0. He was arrested by R.A. Bazar Police in May 2025 with 500 grams of charas in his possession. City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Hamdani, appreciated the SSP Investigation, investigating officers, and the legal team for their excellent work. He reiterated that Rawalpindi Police is taking all possible steps to eliminate the menace of drugs from the district.—APP

Daily Karachi-Turbat flights not viable for now, Senate told

ISLAMABAD: The Senate was informed on Friday that Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is currently unable to operate daily flights on the Karachi-Turbat route due to market demand and fleet limitations, despite concerns raised about insufficient flight frequency. Responding to a question by Senator Jan Muhammad, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that PIA presently operates four flights a week on the Turbat-Karachi sector—on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday—in line with passenger demand and the airline's commercial considerations. The senator had asked why PIA was operating flights after gaps of one or two days despite "sufficient number of passengers" on the route, and when daily service could be expected. Dr Chaudhry informed the House that "considering market demand and fleet availability, daily flight operation is not advisable at this stage." He noted that the national carrier must balance operational costs with commercial viability when determining flight schedules. However, the minister added that the route could be reviewed for possible expansion. "Based on fleet availability and commercial viability, this route can be re-evaluated for increased frequency in the future," he said. APP

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A New Chapter in Pakistan-Indonesia Cultural Cooperation

A Dedicated Indonesia Corner was formally inaugurated at the National Library of Pakistan, marking a significant step forward in strengthening cultural and educational ties between Pakistan and Indonesia. The corner was inaugurated by Federal Minister Aurangzeb Khichi, who lauded the initiative as an important platform for promoting mutual understanding between the two brotherly nations. Speaking at the ceremony, Minister Khichi said the newly established Indonesia Corner would serve as a source of knowledge for students, researchers, and the general public interested in Indonesia's history, culture, literature, and societal values. He noted that Pakistan deeply values its longstanding friendship with Indonesia and emphasized the need for further collaboration, particularly in education, culture, and research. Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan highly appreciated the Government of Pakistan and the National Library for supporting the establishment of the corner. He said the initiative reflects the warmth and depth of Pakistan-Indonesia relations. The ambassador expressed confidence that the facility would bring the people of both nations even closer, allowing Pakistanis to better understand Indonesia's rich cultural heritage, traditions, and modern development experience. A similar Indonesia Corner already exists at the National Book Foundation, which has been widely appreciated by students and readers. The addition of the second corner at the National Library reflects the continued expansion of cultural diplomacy between the two countries.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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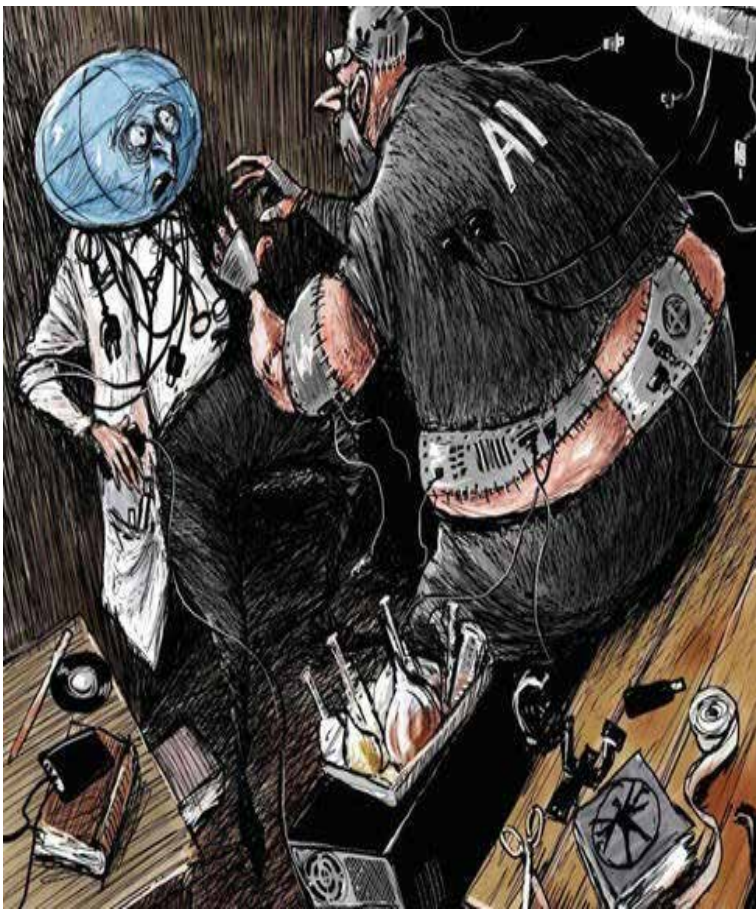
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President of Indonesia is expected to visit Pakistan next month, a visit that both sides believe will further cement bilateral ties. The upcoming presidential visit holds special importance as it comes at a time when Pakistan and Indonesia are looking to enhance cooperation in trade, investment, education, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. Despite strong political and cultural bonds bilateral trade still remains below its true potential. Pakistan primarily imports palm oil and raw materials from Indonesia, while its own exports remain limited. It is hope that the presidential visit will help identify solutions to existing bottlenecks and pave the way for a more balanced, expanded, and mutually beneficial trade relationship. Both countries share deep civilizational and religious commonalities as two major Muslim nations in Asia. Pakistan and Indonesia frequently support each other at international forums and hold similar views on key global issues, including peace, development, and cooperation among Muslim-majority nations. These shared values provide a strong foundation for building an even more dynamic partnership. The inauguration ceremony was attended by diplomats, scholars, students, writers, and members of the literary community. Visitors appreciated the inclusion of Indonesian books, cultural artifacts, photographs, and multimedia resources, which highlight Indonesia's cultural diversity and modern achievements. The Indonesia Corner at the National Library is expected to host cultural events, language courses, academic discussions, and exhibitions in the coming months. Officials said the corner would play a vital role in deepening cultural diplomacy, fostering academic collaboration, and showcasing Indonesia's vibrant identity to Pakistanis. With the much-anticipated visit of the Indonesian President next month, both sides hope that this cultural initiative will serve as a symbol of friendship and a stepping stone toward greater cooperation in all fields.

Trump's Tariffs: Rising Suicides, Falling Innovation

Qamar Bashir



The tariff regime further disrupted the industrial and consumer sectors. Import restrictions and retaliatory tariffs led to higher prices for machinery, electronics, household essentials, and raw materials. Manufacturing industries that relied on global supply chains suddenly faced shortages and rising costs. Plants scaled back production, delayed expansion plans, or relocated overseas to avoid tariff pressures. American consumers, already stretched by high living costs, found themselves paying more for everyday necessities—from groceries and clothing to appliances and building materials

THE tariff regime that was sold to the American public as a bold attempt to restore national greatness is now revealing its deeper, more painful underside. What began as a political project aimed at resetting global trade dynamics and reasserting American strength has gradually transformed into an economic and institutional suffocation whose aftershocks are being felt across farms, universities, industries, and households alike. The rhetoric of "billions and billions" pouring into the U.S. Treasury from tariffs created an illusion of financial abundance, but reality has unfolded in the opposite direction: a shrinking export base, collapsing agricultural markets, rising consumer prices, weakened research ecosystems, and a fraying social and political fabric within the United States. The hardest hit have been American farmers. For decades, agriculture functioned as one of the strongest pillars of the U.S. export economy, supplying China, East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East with soybeans, wheat, corn, cotton, dairy, and specialty crops. When tariffs escalated and retaliation began, China—America's most important buyer—swiftly diverted its purchases to Brazil, Argentina, Russia, and even emerging African producers. Billions of dollars in annual exports vanished almost overnight. The loss of the Chinese soybean market alone, once valued at over \$24 billion a year, crippled thousands of farms. Producers who had already been struggling with rising input costs now found themselves with no buyers, plunging commodity prices, and mounting debt. Many depended on emergency federal bailout packages that provided temporary lifelines but no long-term solutions. Others simply quit farming altogether. Rural counties saw rising suicide rates, deepening despair, and a sense of betrayal that no amount of political spin could conceal. What is most tragic is that the tariff policy ended up strengthening the very country it was designed to restrain. China responded not with panic but with acceleration: it diversified its commodity suppliers, expanded domestic agricultural production, invested in storage infrastructure, and built strategic reserves that permanently reduced its reliance on American crops. In effect, the U.S. handed China the incentive to free itself from dependence on American agriculture. While American farmers waited nervously for markets to return, China moved on. By the time Washington realized the scale of the miscalculation, it was too late; the markets had shifted permanently. Thus, the tariff regime did not weaken China's agricultural leverage—it expanded it—while gutting America's strongest export advantage. But economic damage is only one part of the story. The tariff framework produced a chain reaction

that reached into the heart of American research institutions. As international students reconsidered the United States due to geopolitical rancor, visa restrictions, campus surveillance, and rising tuition, universities—long dependent on global talent—began experiencing declines in enrollment, particularly in engineering, computer science, biotechnology, and advanced research fields. For decades, American innovation was powered by an academic ecosystem that welcomed gifted minds from every corner of the world. It was through this heterogeneity of ideas and cultures that U.S. laboratories developed breakthrough technologies, from semiconductors to mRNA vaccines to artificial intelligence systems. The tariff era created an atmosphere of suspicion that made foreign researchers feel scrutinized, monitored, or unwelcome. Many redirected their careers to Canada, Europe, Australia, and especially China, where large, well-funded research parks actively recruited them. Compounding these pressures were the political interventions that accused universities of antisemitism and insufficient action against pro-Palestinian protests. Instead of addressing the concerns of students calling attention to real humanitarian crises, some policymakers used the moment to justify intrusive investigations, funding threats, and speech restrictions. This not only jeopardized academic freedom—one of the foundations of American intellectual leadership—but also discouraged foreign students, particularly from Muslim-majority countries, from pursuing studies in the U.S. The result is a weakening of the very institutions that have historically given America its competitive edge. When research stalls, when laboratories lose staff, when grants dry up, and when campuses spend more time navigating political minefields than conducting scientific inquiry, the country loses its innovative momentum, and rivals gain ground. The tariff regime further disrupted the industrial and consumer sectors. Import restrictions and retaliatory tariffs led to higher prices for machinery, electronics, household essentials, and raw materials. Manufacturing industries that relied on global supply chains suddenly faced shortages and rising costs. Plants scaled back production, delayed expansion plans, or relocated overseas to avoid tariff pressures. American consumers, already stretched by high living costs, found themselves paying more for everyday necessities—from groceries and clothing to appliances and building materials. Inflationary pressure, once dismissed as temporary, became a long-term burden driven by fractured supply chains and reduced imports. This domestic squeeze unfolded alongside a geopolitical realignment that placed the United States at a disadvantage. As Washington doubled down on tariffs, other nations strengthened their trade

agreements, built regional blocs, and opened markets among themselves. China expanded its Belt and Road partnerships, deepened trade ties in Africa and Latin America, and secured long-term access to critical minerals. The European Union pursued trade diversification, reducing dependence on American markets. Even countries once firmly aligned with the United States began exploring alternative economic relationships. The ideological posture of tariff nationalism not only isolated America economically—it weakened its diplomatic influence. A nation that once championed open markets, free exchange, and research collaboration became a symbol of restriction, confrontation, and inward retreat. Perhaps the most significant long-term consequence is the erosion of America's claim to global leadership in science, technology, and higher education. Leadership in the twenty-first century depends not only on military power or financial clout, but on talent attraction, innovation, and the ability to shape the next frontier of discovery. When universities are politically constrained, when international scholars turn away, when research funding declines, and when laboratories lose their brightest minds, the country falls behind. China, meanwhile, has been investing billions into artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, space exploration, and quantum research. As American campuses grapple with political controversies and financial shortages, China accelerates toward technological supremacy. It is a painful irony that a policy intended to revive American greatness has instead hindered many of the nation's greatest strengths. The tariff regime weakened agricultural power, strained consumers, disrupted industry, diminished university vitality, discouraged global talent, and compromised future research breakthroughs. Instead of elevating America, it created new obstacles that will take years to undo. Reversing course is not simply a matter of lifting tariffs; it requires rebuilding trust with global partners, restoring market access for farmers, revitalizing universities, protecting academic freedom, and reopening the doors to foreign students and researchers who have long contributed to America's intellectual legacy. It means reaffirming the values that once made the United States the world's magnet for talent and innovation. Only then can the country reclaim its leadership role and repair the damage left by a tariff experiment that cost far more than it delivered.

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

Pakistan's struggle to build a knowledge-based Economy

Naira Eshaal

Hattar Special Economic Zone is around 50 km from Islamabad. Islamabad also offers employment opportunities for the citizens of Rawalpindi and it encourages collaboration between research institutions in Islamabad and manufacturing companies in Hattar in areas of technology and energy. It has an industrial area in I-9 and I-19 and the Kahuta Triangle. These can be exploited as mini-Export Promotion Zones. These zones may focus on software exports compatible with the goals of Pakistan's digital economy and handicrafts...

PAKISTAN has been facing many problems that hinder its development. However, we may identify these problems and try to suggest some doable policies for making it stand with pride on an international scale. Let us discuss briefly what are the issues hindering its development. It has a weak economy, political instability, and there are governance issues. All these are aggravated by adverse climate change effects. Massive public debt is also an old problem. We take loans to pay off the old loans. What can be more harsher fact than this reality? In such a scenario, the loans acquired cannot be used for development purposes. There are low foreign exchange reserves and high poverty levels. Seeing all these, there is a great need for economic reforms and the adoption of an export-led economic growth model. The female participation in the workforce should be increased. There is also a need for climate adaptation and investment in renewable energy sources to minimize the energy crisis and reduce reliance on thermal fuel. Water management strategies should also be adopted for a good infrastructure, like dams and fighting natural disasters. It is also a reality that special economic zones and export promotion zones play an important role in economic revival and industrial growth, as they help in attracting foreign direct investment. Tax incentives should be given, and regulations should be simplified. Infrastructure must be developed. It is necessary that, for a strong economy, more employment opportunities are generated and technology transfer avenues are created. Industrial clusters must be created to enhance productivity and competitiveness. Many examples in Pakistan can be cited in this regard, like SEZ under Rashakai, Dhabeji, and Allama Iqbal SEZ. These are designed to revive industrial output and make the economy export-driven. In this way trade deficit is also reduced. Domestic production of goods must be enabled. There is also a need for export diversification and improvement of the balance of payments. Export Promotion zones are designed for export-oriented production.

They facilitate industries and give wider access to international markets. They increase foreign exchange earnings and diversify exports and Agri-processing. There is a need to strengthen Pakistan's competitiveness in international supply chains through lower production costs. In Pakistan, Karachi Export Processing Zone and Sialkot Export Processing Zone show how targeted incentives can create export hubs. They encourage value added exports leading to stabilization of the currency. Industrial activity gives way to creation of employment and it promotes skill development and empowerment of women and youth in the manufacturing sectors. In the context of Pakistan, one suggestion can be placement of these special economic zones near educational institutions can lead to improving technical education and skill upgrading through industry-academia linkages. In this way, the education is aligned with market needs and poverty is reduced. The urban and rural employment gap is also bridged. There is a need for institutional efficiency as both SEZ and EPZ work through autonomous management authorities. Hence, there is more transparency and efficient administrative processes which are involved, which are often not seen in many other government departments. One window operations lead to decreasing bureaucratic hurdles and minimizing corruption. One suggestion is to strengthen the Board of Investment and zone authorities. Here, digital transparency tools can improve governance outcomes nationally. Pakistan should also try for climate resilience and green industrialization. Modern SEZs can be designed as eco industrial parks. Emphasis should be on clean energy and production practices that are sustainable. There must be the use of low-emission technologies that can make SEZs models of green growth. Climate-smart infrastructure in these Special Economic Zones would facilitate the country to integrate it with low low-carbon industrial strategy. There is also a need for strengthening regional connectivity as the Special Economic Zones are placed near transparent corridors, ports, and borders. Regional integration opportunities are improved in

this manner. One example is the East-West Economic Corridor linking South Asia with Central Asia. Transit trade and cross-national value chains must be facilitated, thus leading to an increase in Pakistan's strategic and economic relevance in the region. Islamabad is connected through the M-1 and M-2 motorways, thus connecting with Faisalabad, Lahore, and Peshawar. In this manner, it becomes a central unit from administrative and logistic point of view. SEZ and EPZ may be developed in northern Pakistan also. ICT can work as a policy and regulatory center with institutions like BOI, CPEC Authority and Ministries of Industries and Production for maintaining SEZs and EPZs, as it is near Rawal Industrial Estate and the upcoming Hattar SEZ in Haripur, allowing it to support these through policy, research, and manpower that is skilled. Hattar Special Economic Zone is around 50 km from Islamabad. Islamabad also offers employment opportunities for the citizens of Rawalpindi and it encourages collaboration between research institutions in Islamabad and manufacturing companies in Hattar in areas of technology and energy. It has an industrial area in I-9 and I-19 and the Kahuta Triangle. These can be exploited as mini-Export Promotion Zones. These zones may focus on software exports compatible with the goals of Pakistan's digital economy and handicrafts, electronic assembly, etc. These zones can link the production with the ecosystem of academia. Through linking these clusters with the national development framework, the capital city can prove to become a model knowledge-based Export Processing Zone with an emphasis on manufacturing of low-carbon exports. Islamabad hosts the decision-making machinery, so it has an edge in asserting a regulatory and facilitative role for EPZs and SEZs. A suggestion is that Islamabad Technology and Export Zone (ITEZ) can be created with a focus on IT exports, software development, digital services, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy components. Partnerships with foreign investors for state-of-the-art manufacturing under CPEC Phase II can also be a good step.

Briefs

Ceasefire
not holding
amid terror
attacks...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan had expected Kabul to uphold. The spokesperson said the understanding with Afghanistan meant that "there would be no terrorist attack by Afghan-sponsored terrorist proxies into Pakistan." However, he noted that several major attacks had taken place after this commitment, carried out by TTP, FAK and other Afghan nationals allegedly operating from Afghan soil. "Interpreting it in that sense, the ceasefire is not holding," he stated, adding that the situation must be understood strictly in the context of terrorist infiltration, not conventional warfare. The spokesperson pointed out that recent attacks inside Pakistan, including in Islamabad, had involved Afghan nationals, raising serious concerns about Taliban-era assurances. He stressed that the responsibility to prevent such incidents lies with the Afghan interim authorities, who must ensure their territory is not used against Pakistan. Regarding Afghanistan's statements suggesting retaliation after the strike Kabul attributed to Pakistan, the Foreign Office dismissed the notion of panic or fear, saying Pakistan's defence apparatus remained vigilant and prepared. "Our security forces remain fully alert. Our military preparedness is robust," the spokesperson said. "The security challenges we face would be addressed with the seriousness they merit." The exchange comes amid rising tensions between the two neighbours, with Pakistan repeatedly accusing militant groups based in Afghanistan of orchestrating attacks, and Kabul denying involvement.

Pakistan,
Australia
agree to
check...

FROM PAGE 01
Both sides agreed to enhance collaboration to curb illegal immigration, stressing the need for coordinated efforts and information sharing. The two ministers also discussed the launch of training programs for officers of Pakistan's police and paramilitary forces. The meeting further explored possibilities for increased cooperation between Australia's security agencies and Pakistan's National Cyber Crimes Investigation Agency, as well as the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). In a significant development, Pakistan and Australia decided to establish a Joint Working Group to advance bilateral cooperation in security and law enforcement. The two ministers also exchanged views on the upcoming tour of the Australian cricket team to Pakistan. Minister Mohsin Naqvi briefed his Australian counterpart on the security arrangements being put in place for the visiting team. Naqvi extended an invitation to Minister Burke to visit Pakistan, as both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations.

PTI
neglecting KP
governance,
focused on...

FROM PAGE 01
development, and public relief, spending its time in Islamabad revolving politics around the same unlawful narrative. Tarar further alleged that a female PTI politician employed a negative strategy by orchestrating a malicious campaign against Khan Sahib through accounts hostile to Pakistan operating from Afghanistan and amplified by Indian media. He said the campaign aimed to malign Pakistan's image globally, describing it as open hostility towards the country. Tarar added it was an attempt to damage the nation's reputation and urged PTI to abandon its anti-state narrative and misplaced priorities, calling on the party to put the interests of the state and people first.

Portugal envoy visits AKDN
development projects

The Embassy of Portugal looks very much forward to exploring future avenues of cooperation with AKDN, recognizing the Network as a very valuable partner in promoting human development, social progress and inclusive growth in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, Frederico Silva, during his working visit to Sindh, Karachi and Thatta, from 21 to 26 November 2025, dedicated a special focus on visiting and assessing socio-economic development projects implemented by the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) in the provincial capital and across Sindh province. The visit highlighted, once again, the exceptional quality, scale and community impact of AKF's long-standing work in Pakistan, under the very able guidance of its CEO Mr. Akhtar Iqbal. The visits also included Aga Khan Education entities ("AK Higher Secondary School", "Sultan Mahomed Shah AK School" and the "Aga Khan Institute for Educational Development"), evidencing the excellence of its innovative teaching models, training programs and the high quality of their habitat. After meeting the Aga Khan University (AKU) leadership, the Portuguese delegation toured its internationally recognized hospital and discussed opportunities for further academic exchange and collaboration. The Ambassador praised AKU's reputation for excellence, calling it "one of the most impressive institutions of higher learning and medical care in South Asia." A full-day field visit to Thatta District, provided firsthand insight into the



AKRSP's (Aga Khan Rural Support Programme) work in rural and coastal communities. The delegation visited projects supporting sustainable livelihoods, including crab and shrimp ponds in the village of Ahmed Khan Baluch, as well as community-led improvements in sanitation, potable water access and small-scale agriculture in surrounding villages. These initiatives demonstrated AKDN's renowned ability to deliver high-impact,

people-centered development in some of the province's most underserved areas. Throughout the visit, the Ambassador commended the Aga Khan Development Network for its remarkable contributions to Pakistan, praising the organization's "professionalism, vision and deep commitment to improving lives across Sindh, as in other Provinces of the country," noting that AKDN's work in education, health and rural development, amongst

many other areas of intervention, "stands as a model of excellence providing high standards of effective, long-term and sustainable investment in empowering communities and citizens" The Embassy of Portugal looks very much forward to exploring future avenues of cooperation with AKDN, recognizing the Network as a very valuable partner in promoting human development, social progress and inclusive growth in Pakistan.

Dozens dead as floods
ravage Southeast Asia

MEDAN: The toll from days of flooding in Southeast Asia rose on Friday, with at least 90 dead in Indonesia, and a hospital in southern Thailand announcing its morgue was full. Heavy rains across Indonesia, Malaysia and southern Thailand have inundated cities, trapped thousands and caused deadly landslides. Authorities were scrambling to reach people stranded in floodwater-filled homes or cut off entirely by debris that has blocked roads and taken out communications and electricity. On Indonesia's Sumatra island, officials said flooding and landslides this week have killed at least 90 people, with dozens more missing. North Sumatra police spokesman Ferry Walintukan said authorities were focused on "evacuation and providing assistance". Access to some areas and communication was still cut off, he told AFP. "Hopefully, the weather will clear up so we can move the helicopter to the (worst-hit) locations." In North Sumatra's Medan, an AFP photographer saw murky brown floodwaters at hip level, and residents ask-

ing drivers passing their inundated homes to drive slowly to avoid splashing them. Some residents donned rain ponchos and motorbike helmets to protect themselves from the rain as they traversed flooded streets. In West Sumatra, 53-year-old Misniati described a terrifying battle against rising floodwaters to reach her husband at home. Returning from early morning prayers at a local mosque, "I noticed the street was flooded." "I tried to run back to my house to tell my husband, and the water was already reaching my waist," she told AFP. She battled currents that nearly knocked her off her feet, and arrived home to find the water at chest level. "We didn't sleep at all last night, we just monitored the water," said Misniati, who only uses one name. The annual monsoon season, typically between June and September, often brings heavy rains, triggering landslides and flash floods. It has been exacerbated by a tropical storm in the region in recent days. Climate change also has impacted storm patterns, including the dura-

tion and intensity of the season, leading to heavier rainfall, flash flooding and stronger wind gusts. A warmer climate holds more moisture, producing more intense rain events, while warmer oceans can turbocharge the strength of storm systems. Pakistani actress Sonya Hussyn has won the Best Supporting Actress award for her powerful performance in the film Deemak at the prestigious Eurasian Open Award "Diamond Buttery" ceremony held in Moscow. The film stood out among 34 entries from 17 countries, including two Pakistani productions – Deemak and Love Guru, according to a press release from the Pakistan Embassy in Moscow. The festival celebrated cinematic excellence from across Eurasia and beyond, with Deemak earning high praise from the international jury. Following the win, Sonya Hussyn said in her remarks on a social media platform, "Deemak rises again... This moment is bigger than an award. It's proof that when a dream is carried with honesty, hunger, and heart... it finds its way home." – Agencies

Arshad Nadeem sets
sights on upcoming
events after Gold at
Islamic Solidarity Games

LAHORE: Pakistan's star javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem is now turning his focus to the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and the Diamond League, following his gold-medal triumph at the Islamic Solidarity Games earlier this month. On Wednesday, Arshad had the honor of lighting the torch for the 35th National Games at Punjab Stadium. During the ceremony, he spoke to the media, expressing gratitude for the support he has received and sharing his goals for the upcoming season. "I am thankful to Allah for winning a medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games," Arshad said. "Being part of the torch relay was a proud moment for me." He also acknowledged the Sports Board Punjab for providing top-class training facilities and unwavering support throughout his journey. Arshad's latest success came on November 19 at the Prince Faisal Bin Fahad Stadium, where he dominated the men's javelin final with a best throw of 83.05 metres on his second attempt. After an opening throw of 74.00m, he crossed the 80-metre mark and never looked back. His series also included throws of 77.06m, a foul on the fifth attempt, and a final throw of 77.98m. Pakistan enjoyed a one-two finish in the event as Muhammad Yasir Sultan claimed the silver medal with a throw of 74.43m, while Nigeria's Samuel Kure took bronze with 75.46m. Notably, Arshad was the only athlete to cross the 80-metre mark, highlighting his dominance on the day. – Agencies

PCB, Cricket
Italy ink MoU on
broader cooperation

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has entered into a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Italian Cricket Federation (FCRI) marking a significant step forward in international cricket cooperation and sports diplomacy. The MoU was penned by Chief Operating Officer (COO) PCB Sumair Ahmad Syed and President FCRI Ms. Maria Lorena Haz Paz. Under this strategic partnership, both organizations will collaborate to support the development of men's and women's cricket in Italy, following the Italian national team's recent qualification for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup. The agreement outlines a comprehensive framework focused on technical, structural and competitive development. The key areas of cooperation include: Exchange of technical and coaching experts, joint development and training programmes, including camps, workshops, seminars, friendly matches and bilateral tournaments at various levels, support for infrastructure enhancement and youth cricket development across Italy. Speaking on the occasion, PCB COO Sumair Ahmad Syed emphasized the PCB's commitment to contributing to global cricketing growth, stating that this partnership represents an important opportunity to strengthen sporting and cultural ties between Pakistan and Italy. FCRI President Maria Lorena Haz Paz welcomed the collaboration, noting that the agreement aligns with Italy's broader strategy to elevate its cricketing standards. – APP

Sri Lanka beat Pakistan to
qualify for T20I tri-series final

Dasun Shanaka-led Sri Lanka restrict Green Shirts to 178/7 after posting 184/5 on scoreboard

RAWALPINDI: Sri Lanka secured a place in the T20I tri-series final after beating Pakistan by six runs in the sixth game at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Thursday. The victory, which was Sri Lanka's second in the ongoing series, helped them set up the final against hosts Pakistan, scheduled to be played at the same venue on Saturday. Sri Lanka's victory also put an end to Zimbabwe's hopes of qualifying for the final as they slipped to the bottom of the standings with two points. Set to chase a daunting 185-run target, Pakistan could accumulate 178/7 in 20 overs despite their captain Salman Ali Agha's unbeaten half-century. Pakistan got off to a cautious start to the 185-run target, with the opening pair of Sahibzada Farhan and Saim

Ayub putting together 29 runs for the first wicket before the former fell victim to Dushmantha Chameera in the fourth over. Chameera struck again in the same over, dismissing

star batter Babar Azam for a two-ball duck and reducing the home side to 29/2 in four overs. The Green Shirts lost two more wickets inside the batting powerplay as Saim Ayub and Fakhar Zaman perished in the fifth and sixth overs, respectively, bringing the total down to 43/4. – Agencies



TANVEER HUSSAIN

In a pattern reminiscent of previous crises, India once again constructed a terrorism narrative in the lead-up to its confrontation with Pakistan. Through strategic use of media and diplomatic outreach, New Delhi attempted to convince the international community that Pakistan was orchestrating acts of terrorism on Indian soil. While questions surrounding the Pulwama incident—whether it was an act of terrorism or whether another story lies beneath remain unresolved, India placed direct blame on Pakistan only hours after the event, without investigation. Indian media subsequently launched an aggressive campaign that pushed the country into a state of heightened tension. Round-the-clock coverage, alarmist rhetoric, and frequent appearances by retired military officers brandishing threats involving Rafale jets and BrahMos missiles contributed to a fevered national atmosphere. On the diplomatic front, India intensified its efforts to secure international backing. It informed two key Arab states in advance that it would soon strike what it described as "terrorist hubs" inside Pakistan. Leaders of these friendly Arab nations relayed cautionary messages to Islamabad, urging restraint in the event of an Indi-

an attack and warning that the Islamic world would not withstand another crisis resembling Gaza. Their advice stemmed from concern for Pakistan, influenced by India's cultivated image over recent years as an emerging global military and economic power capable of rivaling China. Believing India to hold overwhelming military superiority, these states feared that a bilateral conflict could inflict irreparable damage on Pakistan. Pakistan, however, declined their recommendation. Since independence, the two nuclear-armed neighbours have endured multiple wars, and Pakistan maintains a state of constant readiness. Confident in its defense capabilities, Islamabad made clear to its allies that any Indian aggression would be met with a decisive and forceful response. On the night of 6 May 2025, India launched missile strikes against several Pakistani cities. Pakistani forces, already on high alert, responded immediately. The Pakistan Air Force, deploying J-10C fighter jets equipped with Chinese-made PL-15 missiles, shot down six Indian aircraft—three of them Rafales—asserting aerial dominance across the region. Further escalation followed on 10 May, when India targeted Rawalpindi and other cities using drones and BrahMos missiles. Pakistan's retaliatory response was significantly harsher. A barrage of Al-Fatah missiles struck deep inside India, while JF-17 Thunder aircraft neutralized the Russian-supplied S-400 air defense system. Pakistani cyber teams simultaneously penetrated Indian communication networks, disrupting command-and-control systems. The attacks caused widespread destruction, including damage to multiple air bases such as Udhampur, Adampur, Bathinda, and Pathankot. The bri-

gade headquarters in Akhnoor was also crippled. Military analysts report that Pakistan successfully neutralized Indian aerial capabilities during the operation, destroying more than ninety Indian drones. Drone strikes expanded across Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, and other sensitive regions. The magnitude of the losses reportedly shocked Indian leadership, which had not anticipated such an intense Pakistani response. Although a major counteroffensive was initially ordered, the Indian Air Force was reportedly unable to execute it, compelling India to reluctantly seek a ceasefire. Mediation by U.S. President Donald Trump ultimately resulted in a cessation of hostilities. Operation Bunyan-e-Marsous is being hailed by analysts as a notable example of modern, multidomain warfare. The simultaneous application of ground, air, and cyber operations succeeded in disabling critical enemy systems, marking the operation as a significant strategic success. Experts suggest that its impact will continue to shape India's internal security and military planning for months ahead. In the aftermath, Pakistan received considerable international recognition. The professionalism and bravery of the Pakistan Air Force were widely acknowledged. Several Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, initiated new defense agreements with Islamabad. The global demand for Pakistani-produced aircraft also surged. Azerbaijan and several other friendly Muslim countries expressed interest in purchasing large fleets of JF-17 Thunder jets. These developments are expected not only to bolster Pakistan's economy but also to enhance its international standing and strategic influence.

KP CM
calls off
sit-in on
Adiala
Road

FROM PAGE 01
the entire night at the protest site. "We spent the night here with the workers – this was only one night," he said, adding, "If we have to spend our whole lives here for the PTI founder, we will do so." "We have not yet been told anything about the condition of the PTI founder," he said. The chief minister said that they would not back down from their demands. "We will not retreat from our protests and sit-ins," he asserted. CM Afridi said he has used "all constitutional and legal options" in an attempt to meet the PTI founder, but to no avail. "I have used every constitutional and legal path. What route is left for me to meet my leader?" he asked. The chief minister said that despite a court order, neither he nor other party leaders were allowed to meet Imran. Criticising the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), he said, "Previously, those who would flee to London were allowed to meet groups of 50 people (in jail) at a time."

Yuri
Gagarin
monument
unveiled in
Islamabad

FROM PAGE 01
and Russian pilot-cosmonaut and Hero of Russia Elena Serova. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Tsvilev said, "This is the greatest feat in our shared history. A huge number of scientists are engaged in space research. Let this work benefit all countries of the world." He also announced that Islamabad will host a Russia-Pakistan conference next year, dedicated to advancing cooperation in cosmonautics and space infrastructure – a development welcomed by both sides as a major step towards expanding bilateral scientific collaboration. The inauguration coincided with the 10th meeting of the Russia-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation, currently underway in Islamabad. The Russian Embassy expressed gratitude to the International Charitable Fund "Dialogue of Cultures – United World" for donating the bust of Yuri Gagarin, to the St. Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange for its support in the installation, and to Pakistani authorities for facilitating the project. The monument is expected to serve as a symbol of expanding people-to-people ties and growing cooperation between Russia and Pakistan in science, technology, and culture.

Putin to
visit India
on Dec 4

FROM PAGE 01
before ordering troops into Ukraine in February 2022. "This visit is of great importance, providing an opportunity to comprehensively discuss the extensive agenda of Russian-Indian relations as a particularly privileged strategic partnership," the Kremlin said in a statement. It said the relationship covered bilateral political, trade, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, and humanitarian spheres. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly called on Modi for India to stop buying oil from Russia. India has been one of the biggest purchasers of Russian oil. Trade and refining sources said this week that India's Russian oil imports were set to hit their lowest in at least three years in December, down from multi-month highs in November, as refiners turned to alternatives to avoid breaching Western sanctions.

Briefs

PSX extends
bullish run,
gains 1,304
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday maintained its bullish trajectory, rising by 1,304.39 points, a positive change of 0.79 percent, to close at 166,677.70 points compared to 165,373.31 points on the previous trading day, according to PSX data.

A total of 592.74 million shares were traded in the ready market with a value of Rs41.96 billion, up from 498.36 million shares worth Rs30.59 billion in the previous session. Market capitalization increased to Rs18.866 trillion from Rs18.744 trillion.

Out of 478 active companies, 238 closed higher, 199 declined, while 41 remained unchanged.

The leading companies in terms of ready-market turnover were Sui Southern Gas with 39.18 million shares, followed by Bank of Punjab with 34.17 million shares, and WorldCall Telecom with 32.86 million shares. The top gainers were Service Industries Limited, which increased by Rs120.13 to close at Rs1,570.21, and Sazgar Engineering Works Limited, rising by Rs75.36 to close at Rs1,776.95. Conversely, the major losers were PIA Holding Company Limited-B, which declined by Rs518.50 to close at Rs23,977.00, and Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited, decreasing by Rs300.00 to close at Rs29,100.00. In the futures market, turnover rose to 824.59 million shares with a traded value of Rs40.30 billion, compared to 595.96 million shares valued at Rs27.19 billion on the previous day. Out of 318 futures-market companies, 209 recorded gains, 107 declined, while 2 remained unchanged. The top volume contracts in the futures segment were WTL-Nov with 53.19 million shares, followed by WTL-Dec with 42.73 million shares, and KEL-Nov with 42.34 million shares.—APP

Gold, silver
prices remain
unchanged

ISLAMABAD: The price of per tola of 24-karat gold on Friday 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.

Likewise, the price of per tola silver remained constant at Rs 5,642, while that of 10 grams of silver stood unchanged at Rs 4,837. Silver was traded at \$53.70 a the existing rates, the association reported.—APP

SECP warns
against
reauthorize
trading
platforms

ISLAMABAD :The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued Public warning against unauthorized trading platforms “Equitrix Investment Management LLC” and “ahlexchange.com.” which are enticing the public by promising exaggerated returns on investments in listed companies’ shares, said a release issued here on Friday.

These entities are falsely associating themselves with Arif Habib Limited, a licensed brokerage house. This advisory is part of the SECP’s ongoing effort to caution the public against illegal investment and trading platforms. These platforms are often promoted through social media and WhatsApp groups by individuals fraudulently using the names of licensed securities and commodities brokers. The public is hereby informed that “Equitrix Investment Management LLC” and “ahlexchange.com” are neither licensed nor authorized by the SECP to operate any investment or trading platform.—APP

Nigeria, Pakistan agree for
boosting investment ties

The two sides also explored opportunities in key sectors including energy, agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, information technology, and halal trade, while reaffirming their shared commitment to supporting each other in multilateral forums.

ABUJA: Yusuf Maitama Tuggar, OON, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, hosted Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Commerce in a productive meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abuja (Nigeria).

The discussions focused on enhancing economic cooperation, deepening trade and investment ties, and fostering stronger bilateral relations between the two nations. The meeting was also attended by Major General (Retd) Sohail Ahmad Khan, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Nigeria, underscoring the commitment to high-level diplomatic engagement, said a press release issued here on Friday. Both sides expressed strong political will to elevate the Nigeria-Pakistan relationship to new heights. In the meeting include agreement to fast-track the finalization and signing of the Nigeria-Pakistan Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), with technical teams directed to conclude outstanding issues in the shortest possible time. Both sides showed, Commitment to



introduce measures for greater ease of visa issuance for Pakistani businesspersons, investors, and tourists traveling to Nigeria, and reciprocal facilitation for Nigerian nationals visiting Pakistan. An invitation extended on behalf

of Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan, President of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at a mutually convenient date. The two sides also explored opportunities

in key sectors including energy, agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, information technology, and halal trade, while reaffirming their shared commitment to supporting each other in multilateral forums. It is pertinent to mention

that Nigeria stands as Africa’s largest economy with a GDP of over \$477 billion (nominal, 2025 estimates), powered by its vast oil and gas reserves, rapidly expanding services and technology sectors, and a burgeoning consumer market. Home to more than 230 million people – the continent’s biggest population and the world’s sixth-largest – the country possesses an unmatched demographic dividend, with a youthful, dynamic workforce driving entrepreneurship and innovation. As a founding member of The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a leading contributor to peacekeeping missions across Africa, and the political and cultural heartbeat of West Africa, Nigeria wields unparalleled influence on the continent, making it not only the giant of Africa but also an emerging global player whose decisions shape regional stability, trade, and development. Both nations expressed confidence that these discussions will lead to tangible economic gains and enhanced people-to-people contacts in the near future.—Agencies

Turkiye not ‘hostile’
to Christians

“The spiritual leaders in Russia cannot follow blindly the inhumane interests and barbarous policies of its political leaders. Nor can they indiscriminately condone and even bless the bloodshed in Ukraine,” he said

ISTANBUL: Muslim-majority Turkiye, which is hosting Pope Leo XIV on his first overseas trip as pontiff, is not “a hostile environment” for Christians, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople told AFP in an interview “It is simplistic to see adversaries everywhere and to imagine the pope’s visit as taking sides in a hostile environment,” said Patriarch Bartholomew I, leader of the world’s 260 million Orthodox Christians. On Friday, Bartholomew joins Leo for celebrations in Iznik, around two hours from Istanbul, to mark 1,700 years since the First Council of Nicaea, a key early Church gathering that resulted in a statement of faith still central to Christianity. After arriving in Ankara on Thursday and meeting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whom critics have accused of wanting to Islamise society, the pope described Turkiye as a “crossroads of sensibilities” that was richer for its “internal diversity.” Turkiye has a population of 86 million but only about 100,000 Christians. Numbers were hit by the Armenian genocide – a term denied by Ankara – during the Ottoman Empire, and the population exchanges and pogroms that saw many Greek Orthodox leave in the early 20th century. But Bartholomew said living in a Muslim country had its advantages. “Living in a predominantly Muslim country is a blessing in disguise because it sustains and strengthens the essential feature of the Ecumenical Patriarchate... open and honest dialogue with all people in all places, irrespective of race and religion,” he said. The timing of Leo’s visit, coming at a moment of conflict, was significant, he said. “This year, when the world is troubled and divided by conflict and antagonism, our meeting with Pope Leo XIV is especially significant,” he said. “It reminds our faithful that we are more powerful and more credible when we are united in our witness and response to the challenges of the contemporary world.” The Eastern Orthodox Church sustained a major blow in 2018 when the Moscow Patriarchate broke ties with the Ecumenical Patriarchate after it recognized the Ukrainian Orthodox Church’s independence from Russia. But Bartholomew insisted “the door of dialogue is always open.” The patriarch, who in March 2022 said he had become “a target of Moscow,” refuses to budge in his stance against the Ukraine war, urging the Moscow Patriarchate to break away from the Kremlin. “The spiritual leaders in Russia cannot follow blindly the inhumane interests and barbarous policies of its political leaders. Nor can they indiscriminately condone and even bless the bloodshed in Ukraine,” he said.—DNA

Human washing
machine goes on
sale in Japan

TOKYO: After wowing World Expo visitors, a human washing machine is now on sale in Japan, a company spokeswoman said Friday. Users lie down in the pod, close the lid and get cleaned like clothes in a washing machine – but without the spin – while music plays. A prototype of the device, called the human washer of the future, attracted long queues at the six-month Expo that wrapped up in Osaka in October after welcoming over 27 million people. Made by Japanese firm Science, the device is an update of a product displayed the last time Osaka hosted the event, in 1970. “Our (company) president was inspired by that as a 10-year-old boy at the time,” Science spokeswoman Sachiko Maekura told AFP. The machine “not only washes your body but also your soul,” she added, while also monitoring users’ heartbeats and other vital signs. After a US resort company contacted Science to see if the prototype would be commercialized, the firm decided to produce it for real. A hotel in Osaka bought the first machine and is preparing to offer the service to hotel guests, the spokeswoman said. Other customers include Yamada Denki, a major consumer electronics retail chain in Japan, which hopes the machine will draw people to visit its outlets, she said. “Because part of the appeal of this machine is rarity, we plan to produce only about 50 units,” Maekura said. Local media reported that the retail price will be 60 million yen (\$385,000).—APP

Iraq to probe gas
complex attack that hit
power supply

BAGHDAD: Iraq said on Thursday it would investigate an attack on a gas complex in the autonomous Kurdistan region, which disrupted gas supplies and caused power cuts. Sabah Al-Numan, the military spokesman for the Iraqi prime minister, said in a statement that the caretaker Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani had ordered “the formation of a high-level investigative committee” to look into the attack. Al-Numan said “terrorist groups are attempting to undermine the country’s stability.” The Khor Mor complex, which supplies most of Kurdistan’s power stations and is owned by Dana Gas, has been hit several times in recent years. Late on Wednesday, regional authorities in northern Kurdistan said that a drone attacked the facility, cutting off all gas supplies to the region’s power stations. Dana Gas said that a rocket attack struck a storage tank at the Khor Mor facility, causing a shutdown in production, but did not cause any casualties. AFP correspondents in Kurdistan reported power cuts across the region, including in the city of Sulaimaniyah. Iraq has only recently regained a sense of normality after decades of war and turmoil, though it still frequently suffers such attacks. Kurdish authorities, who have strong ties to the US, have previously accused armed groups of conducting drone and rocket strikes within their region. Regional Prime Minister Masrour Barzani urged the US on Thursday to provide the region with defensive equipment. The regional electricity authority said the attack had disrupted 80 percent of Kurdistan’s power grid. If the damage is limited to one storage tank, electricity may be restored within 48 hours, the authorities said. Prime Minister Al-Sudani spoke by phone to Barzani and condemned the attack as “an attack on all of Iraq.” Mark Savaya, the US special envoy to Iraq, condemned the attack, which he said had been carried out by “armed groups operating illegally and driven by hostile foreign agendas. “There is no place for such armed groups in a fully sovereign Iraq,” he posted on X. Washington has long pressured Iraq to disarm militant groups and to free itself from foreign interference. The liquid storage tank is part of new facilities partially financed by the US and built by a US contractor, an industry source said. The new facilities were installed as part of the KM250 project, which has boosted the field’s production capacity by 50 percent, Dana Gas and its affiliate Crescent Petroleum said in October. “How many attacks must happen before the US government simply allows the Kurdistan Regional Government to purchase kinetic anti-drone equipment for us to defend our skies and critical infrastructure?” Aziz Ahmad, Barzani’s deputy chief of staff, said in a post on X after the attack.—Agencies

Europe, North America face
early wave of bird flu cases

PARIS: An unusually early outbreak of bird flu cases affecting high numbers of wild birds and poultry farms across Europe and North America is raising concerns of a repeat of previous crises that led to mass culling and food price spikes. The highly pathogenic avian influenza, commonly called bird flu, has led to the culling of hundreds of millions of farmed birds in the past few years, disrupting food supplies and driving up prices. Human infections remain rare.

While outbreaks typically spike in the northern hemisphere autumn as migratory birds fly south, they appeared earlier and in greater numbers in Europe and the US, affecting both wild birds and poultry. In the US, 107 outbreaks were reported by November 18, nearly four times last year’s total. Minnesota, the country’s largest turkey producing state, confirmed its first case two months earlier than in 2022. “It’s certainly more than we’ve seen over the last few winter-fall migratory bird seasons,” said Tim Boring, director of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Michigan, another large turkey state.

“I think it’s part of this ongoing pattern... we’re still well within this current outbreak that’s lasted several years now,” he said. The US has already culled about 8 million birds since September, a slight increase from last year, government data showed. Canada, which has a smaller poultry flock than the US, has also culled nearly 8 million birds. Canadian Agriculture Minister Heath MacDonald said the bird flu situation was getting “very worrisome.” “Wild birds seem to be carrying more of this disease. So it’s scary in some ways,” he told Reuters. The World Organization for Animal Health said the early outbreaks were concerning but not alarming. “There should not be a public health alarm. An increase in number of cases could have different explanations. What we need to observe is the actual virus itself,” said Gregorio Torres, head of WOAH’s scientific department. In Europe, the situation was also more severe than last year, with Germany recording the highest number of outbreaks in three years. Between early September and mid-November, 1,443 cases of bird flu were detected in wild birds

in 26 European countries – a fourfold increase compared with the same period in 2024 and the highest since 2016, the European food safety agency EFSA said. “What’s new this season? It’s not exactly the same birds that are being affected. This time, we’ve seen contamination occur earlier among wild birds, and now we’re starting to detect cases that are spreading to farmed birds,” French health security agency ANSES Deputy Director General Gilles Salvat told reporters on Thursday. Salvat pointed to common cranes – which typically migrate earlier than waterfowl species such as ducks, geese and swans – as a major factor behind the outbreak, which spread from northeast to southwest Europe, with high fatalities in Germany and France. France put its poultry sector on high alert in October, much earlier than in previous years. The situation was more normal in most of Asia except for Cambodia, which has seen severe bird flu outbreaks, while Japan reported its first case on October 22 – five days later than last year. About 1.65 million birds have been culled so far in Japan.—Agencies

Turkiye court
acquits
dozens over
Istanbul
protests

ISTANBUL: A Turkish court on Friday acquitted 87 people accused of joining protests over the jailing of Istanbul’s popular mayor in March, court documents obtained by AFP showed.

The defendants, mostly young people and students, were arrested in late March during a wave of protests in support of Istanbul’s opposition mayor Ekrem Imamoglu. Imamoglu is a key rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. “Because it was not proven that the defendants committed the alleged act, it was decided that each of the defendants be acquitted of the charge against them,” the judge said during the hearing at Istanbul’s main Caglayan court house. The defendants’ families welcomed the ruling. “Once again, justice and youth have triumphed,” the Velider association of parents and students said on X.

Turkish authorities cracked down on the protests, arresting nearly 2,000 people including students and journalists. On Thursday, the court in Istanbul acquitted four journalists, including AFP photographer Yasin Akgul, over their role in the mass protests.—APP

Algerian
stresses
boosting
bilateral
trade ties

RAWALPINDI: Brahim Romanihe, Ambassador of Algeria to Pakistan, visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and held an interactive session with the business community here on Friday. Upon arrival, he was warmly received by RCCI President Usman Shaukat, Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, and members of the Executive Committee. Ambassador Romani urged Pakistani businessmen to take full advantage of the liberal economic policies of Algeria, emphasizing his country’s keen interest in enhancing trade and economic cooperation with Pakistan. He highlighted that Pakistan and Algeria signed a bilateral trade agreement in February 2023, and both countries have witnessed consistent growth in trade over the years. During the session, President RCCI Usman Shaukat briefed the ambassador on the Chamber’s ongoing initiatives and activities. He said there is vast potential to expand bilateral trade in sectors such as energy, pharmaceuticals and textiles.—APP

Jordan
tells Russia
to stop
recruiting its
citizens after
two killed

AMMAN: Jordan on Thursday asked Russia to stop recruiting its citizens for its armed forces after two of them were killed fighting for Moscow.

In a statement, the foreign ministry called the recruitment “a violation of Jordanian law and international law” that “exposes citizens to serious danger.” Spokesman for the ministry Fuad Al-Majali called on Jordanians “to report any attempts to recruit them into the Russian army” and warned of both legal risks and the danger of death. The ministry, he said, “has requested the Russian authorities to stop recruiting Jordanians and to terminate the service of any Jordanian citizens already enlisted.” The ministry was also aware of online recruitment efforts, he said. It is illegal for Jordanians to join the armed forces of a foreign country. It’s unknown how many Jordanians may have been recruited, but hundreds live in Russia and more than 20,000 have studied in the countries of the former Soviet Union, according to unofficial data. Early in Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, when Moscow was propping up former president Bashar Assad’s rule in Syria, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he wanted to recruit 16,000 fighters from the Middle East – with around 2,000 regular Syrian troops later reportedly sent to Russia. —APP

Briefs

NA Speaker reiterates commitment to dialogue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday reaffirmed his commitment to political dialogue, stressing that meaningful engagement remains the key to resolving national issues. Welcoming the opposition members in the National Assembly and Senate to his chamber, he reaffirmed his commitment to dialogue, stressing that all issues could be resolved through meaningful engagement. He underscored the importance of consensus-building as a cornerstone of the parliamentary process. "I have always advocated for dialogue. All issues can be resolved through meaningful engagement," Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the relationship of mutual respect and fraternity among parliamentarians transcends political differences. He remarked, "I have been in contact with you since 2014. Politics is not permanent but the relationships among Members of Parliament should endure throughout life." During the meeting, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan raised the matter of allowing family members of the PTI founder to meet him. The Opposition delegation appreciated the Speaker's efforts in facilitating constructive engagement between the government and the opposition, acknowledging his role in promoting dialogue and parliamentary harmony. The delegation included Senator Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Senator Faisal Javed, former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser, and MNAs Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Iqbal Afridi, Atif Khan, Dr. Anjad Ali Khan, Sardar Muhammad Latif Khan Khosa, and Muhammad Jamal Ahsan Khan.

UN decries 'apparent summary execution'

GENEVA: The United Nations said Friday that the killing of two Palestinians, shot dead in the West Bank while seemingly surrendering to Israeli forces, was an "apparent summary execution". "We are appalled at the brazen killing by Israeli border police yesterday of two Palestinian men in Jenin," UN rights office spokesman Jeremy Laurence told reporters in Geneva, calling the incident "yet another apparent summary execution". He said UN rights chief Volker Turk was calling for "independent, prompt and effective investigations into the killings of Palestinians", and for those responsible for killings and other violations in the West Bank to "be held fully to account". The Israeli army and police said Thursday they were investigating the killings in Jenin in the northern West Bank, which was filmed from several angles, including by AFP. Videos circulating on social media and on television channels showed two men emerging from a building with their arms raised, surrounded by Israeli forces. - Agencies

Aurangzeb Reaffirms Commitment to Vibrant, Inclusive Capital Market

The Council reviewed the Terms of Reference and the overall roadmap for capital market development plan and strategy, emphasising the adoption of global best practices and a structured approach to market broadening, deepening and widening

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said here on Friday that the government was committed to building vibrant and inclusive capital markets that could play a pivotal role in financing economic expansion, broadening investor participation, and advancing the structural reforms underway. "Developing a modern, integrated, and investor-friendly capital market ecosystem is a key national priority, essential for improving access to finance, promoting savings, deepening market activity, and strengthening Pakistan's long-term economic resilience," he said while chairing the inaugural meeting of the Capital Market Development Council (CMDC) to review the roadmap for strengthening and expanding Pakistan's capital markets. The meeting brought together senior leadership from key financial institutions, corporate sector, regulators, and government departments. Representatives from the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Pakistan Banks Association (PBA), Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), Central Depository Company (CDC),

National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NC-CPL), Pakistan Business Council (PBC), and the Finance Division participated in the meeting. The Council reviewed the Terms of Reference and the overall roadmap for capital market development plan and strategy, emphasising the adoption of global best practices and a structured approach to market broadening, deepening and widening. Discussions focused on strengthening four core areas, including enhancing participation of retail and institutional investors; developing diversified investment products tailored to investor needs; improving facilitation for intermediaries including banks, brokers, and mutual funds; amongst others, and creating incentives for investors and issuers, including measures for cross-border listings, collaborations, and wider market integration. The meeting also examined the requirements for cross-border integration of capital markets, alignment of market technologies, regulatory modernization and the need to incentivize issuers to raise funds through both debt and equity capital markets. - APP

Putin says Russia will fight on unless Ukraine cedes land

Russia controls around one-fifth of Ukraine's territory. The issue of occupied land, which Kyiv has said it will never cede, is among the biggest stumbling blocks in the peace process

BISHKEK: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that he would end his Ukraine offensive if Kyiv withdrew from territory Moscow claims as its own - otherwise his army would take it by force. The Russian army has been slowly but steadily grinding through eastern Ukraine in costly battles against outnumbered and outgunned Ukrainian forces. Washington has meanwhile renewed its push to end the nearly four-year war, putting forward a surprise plan that it hopes to finalise through upcoming talks with Moscow and Kyiv. "If Ukrainian forces leave the territories they hold, then we will stop combat operations," Putin said during a visit to Kyrgyzstan. "If they don't, then we will achieve it by military means." Russia controls around one-fifth of Ukraine's territory. The issue of occupied land, which Kyiv has said it will never cede, is among the biggest stumbling blocks in the peace process. Another important issue in the talks are Western

security guarantees for Ukraine, which Kyiv says are needed to prevent Moscow from invading again in the future. Washington's original plan - drafted without input from Ukraine's European allies - would have seen Kyiv withdraw from its eastern Donetsk region and the United States de facto recognise the Donetsk, Crimea and Lugansk regions as Russian. The US pared back the original plan over the weekend following criticism from Kyiv and Europe, but has not yet released the new version. Putin, who has seen the new plan, said it could be a negotiation starter. "Overall, we agree that it could form the basis for future agreements," he said of the latest draft, which the United States is thought to have shortened to about 20 points. But Russia was still seeking international recognition of the occupied territories, Putin added. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's top aide, Andriy Yermak, strongly denied that in an interview with US outlet The At-

lantic published on Thursday.

"As long as Zelensky is president, no one should count on us giving up territory. He will not sign away territory," Yermak said. "All we can realistically talk about right now is really to define the line of contact," he said, referring to the sprawling 1,100 kilometre (700 mile) front line. US negotiator Steve Witkoff was expected in Moscow next week to discuss the revised document, Putin said. US Army Secretary Dan Driscoll is meanwhile due to visit Kyiv later this week, according to Yermak. In his remarks Thursday, Putin repeated the claim that Russia had encircled the Ukrainian army in Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region - the most fiercely embattled area and a key target for Moscow's forces. "Krasnoarmeysk and Dimitrov are completely surrounded," he said, using the Russian names for the cities. Moscow was also advancing in Vochansk and Siversk, as well as approach-

ing the important logistic hub of Guliaipole, he added. The Russian offensive "is practically impossible to hold back, so there is little that can be done about it", Putin said. Ukraine has denied that Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad are encircled, insisting its forces continue to hold the enemy along the front line. Putin, in power for 25 years, also questioned Zelensky's legitimacy and said signing any agreement with him would be legally "almost impossible" at the moment, a suggestion that has drawn groans from Kyiv and its allies. According to data analysed by AFP from the US-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW), Russian forces have conquered an average of 467 square kilometres (180 square miles) each month in 2025 - a step up from 2024. Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, triggering the worst armed conflict in Europe since World War II. The war has killed hundreds of thousands of people and forced millions to flee their homes.

Global lenders secure \$3.5bn debt package for Reko Diq

US EXIM's \$1.25bn facility helps secure half of the \$3.5bn debt for the \$7.7bn Reko Diq project

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: In a major boost for Pakistan's biggest mining scheme, half of the \$3.5 billion debt required for the Reko Diq copper-gold project has been secured after the US Export-Import (EXIM) Bank approved a \$1.25 billion facility, The News reported.

Officials now expect to achieve full financial close on the \$7.7 billion venture in the first two weeks of December, ahead of a Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC) board meeting on December 9, where final approval is considered likely. The project's capital expenditure was initially estimated at \$6.9 billion, but lenders pushed for an upward revision to \$7.7 billion to build in contingencies and risk buffers. Senior officials involved in the negotiations said \$3.5 billion has already been arranged out of the \$5.5 billion in commitments from multilateral lenders and export credit agencies. "We first approached the most interested international financial institutions, EXIM banks, and export-and-import financing agencies, prioritising those offering the most competitive borrowing terms," one official said. The financial close - earlier targeted for October 2025 - was delayed due to the US government shutdown, which halted EXIM Bank board decisions. With the shutdown now resolved, the bank has approved its \$1.25 billion tranche. Canada's Export Development Canada (EDC) will co-finance the venture as an export credit agency, bringing the combined US EXIM-EDC financing to \$1.4 billion. In return, both agencies will supply critical equipment and services for mine construction.

Pakistan elected ECO chair for 2026

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has been elected as the chair of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Council of Ministers (COM) for the term 2026-27, read a statement issued by the Foreign Office on Friday. The development came during the 29th COM meeting, attended virtually by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar. "The Foreign Ministers of ECO member states congratulated Pakistan on assuming the chairmanship. [DPM Dar] thanked them for their felicitations and support, and said he looked forward to working with them and welcoming all ECO members to Pakistan for the next COM meeting in 2026," the FO said in a post on X. In his address to the meeting, DPM Dar said that Pakistan was committed to the ECO Vision 2025, stressing ECO's role in fostering prosperity, economic integration, and connectivity.

SC terms illegal detention grave misconduct

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has dismissed petitions filed by three police officials from Dera Ghazi Khan against their dismissal from service, ruling that illegal detention, torture and endangering the lives of citizens constitute "grave misconduct" in the police force and cannot be condoned. According to the court's officially approved detailed judgment on Friday, a three-member bench comprising Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan heard the petitions filed by Head Constable Khalid Mehmood and Constables Riaz Hussain and Safdar Ali against the decision of the Punjab Service Tribunal. The petitioners were accused of illegally detaining a citizen, Zaryab Khan, from June 18 to 23, 2020, without any FIR or arrest warrant, and subjecting him to torture, which later led to his death. Although the officials were acquitted in the criminal case by giving them the benefit of the doubt, a departmental inquiry found them guilty of corruption and abuse of authority. After completing the inquiry and hearing the officials, the Regional Police Officer (RPO) of DG Khan deemed the initial recommendation of reducing their salaries insufficient and enhanced the penalty to dismissal from service. - Agencies

Punjab to auction vehicles over repeated traffic violations

Underage driving to result in imprisonment of vehicle owner for up to six months

DNA

LAHORE: Days after Punjab government announced hefty fines and stricter penalties under new traffic rules, it has come to light that the authorities will be auctioning the vehicles over repeated challans for traffic violations. Chairing a meeting on planning of a modern traffic system on Friday, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was told that 20 major reforms had been introduced in the 60-year-old Traffic Act, which also feature fines even for government-owned vehicles. Apart from setting a 30-day deadline to end the violation of one-way, the meeting was also informed that in cases of underage driving, the vehicle owner can be imprisoned for up to six months. Furthermore, a crackdown has been ordered across Punjab against those who give rides on the roof of buses and a complete ban has been imposed on Qingqi rickshaws

on five model roads in Lahore. "Traffic issues will have to be improved in all cities including Lahore," remarked CM Maryam while stressing that there should be no discrimination and everyone will have to pay a fine for violation of traffic rules. On the issue of parking, the meeting was told that marriage halls will not be allowed to operate without the availability of proper parking space. Also, it was decided that immediate compensation will be provided to families of people killed in traffic accidents. Under the ordinance, signed by Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider, driving without a fitness certificate can now lead to a fine of up to Rs100,000 along with imprisonment, while the use of non-standard window glass carries a jail term of up to six months. Violating one-way traffic rules may result in six months' imprisonment or a fine of up to Rs50,000. The new ordinance makes it mandatory for the front-seat passenger to wear a seat belt, with strict penalties for non-compliance. Punishment for underage driving has been doubled, and parents will also be held legally responsible.

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