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Ukraine envoy rejects Russian narrative as baseless, unfounded

Detailed News On Page-08

All parties moot to discuss country issues

Detailed News On Page-01



Pakistan to have deal with Russia for oil import

Detailed News On Page-01



Briefs

UN chief urges fresh global action on refugees

DNA

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday urged renewed international action on the refugee crisis, warning the situation has deteriorated since the last Global Refugee Forum as conflicts grow, displacement rises, borders tighten and humanitarian funding is cut, Anadolu reported. The second Global Refugee Forum Progress Review, organised by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Swiss government, has begun in Geneva, with Guterres addressing participants via a video message. He called for stronger backing for countries hosting refugees, noting that low- and middle-income nations shelter nearly three-quarters of the world's displaced people. Guterres also urged governments to do more to include refugees in local economies and support self-reliance. "We must boost refugee inclusion and self-reliance a dignified way to unlock human potential," he said, adding that it could strengthen local economies and reduce dependence on aid.

Mazari case Witnesses statements afresh: IHC

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday ordered the trial court hearing the controversial social media posts case against rights activist Imaan Mazari-Hazir and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha to record witnesses' statements afresh within three days. IHC's Justice Mohammed Azam Khan passed the directives while hearing a petition filed by Mazari challenging the trial court's November 19 order, when the court had recorded the testimonies of all prosecution witnesses. Chattha had appeared before the court while Imaan's lawyers had marked her presence. The court, however, had ordered the prosecution to proceed with the witnesses' testimonies. On Tuesday, IHC's Justice Khan observed that witnesses' statements should be recorded again and said that the case was being referred back to the trial court without touching its merits.

Thailand says Cambodia must announce ceasefire

BANGKOK: Thailand said Tuesday that Cambodia must be first to announce a truce to halt fighting between the two nations after more than a week of deadly clashes in a reignited border conflict. "As the aggressor onto Thai territory, Cambodia must announce the ceasefire first," Thai foreign ministry spokeswoman Maratee Nalita Andamo told reporters in Bangkok, adding that Cambodia must also cooperate in de-mining efforts at the border "sincerely". Renewed fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours this month has killed at least 32 people, including soldiers and civilians, and displaced around 800,000, officials said. Each side has blamed the other for instigating the clashes, claiming self-defence and trading accusations of attacks on civilians. Cambodia did not immediately respond to Thailand's statement. — APP

Regional Connectivity

Pak seeks oil accord with Russia

"We would be very happy if Russia agreed on an agreement in this sector with Pakistan," says finance minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Russia are in talks on a potential oil-sector agreement, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told. "All of these areas are Russia's strengths. And we would be very happy if Russia agreed on an agreement in this sector with Pakistan," Aurangzeb told RIA in an interview when asked about wider cooperation in exploration, production and refining between the two countries. "At present, the issue is being discussed by the energy ministries of both sides." Russia also discussed upgrading a refinery in the country with Russian companies involved, Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev had said in November. Islamabad has stepped up engagement with Russia in recent years as Moscow sought new energy markets after Western sanctions over Ukraine, and Islamabad looked to lower import costs. Pakistan began buying Russian crude in 2023. Aurangzeb also said Russia and Pakistan are looking into building another steel plant in Pakistan, RIA reported. Pakistan previously received Russian crude shipments in 2023 under a government-led arrangement. The first cargo arrived at Karachi port on June 2023, when a tanker carrying 45,000 tonnes of Russian crude docked. The government had placed the first order for 100,000 tonnes of

Continued on Page 06

Asad Qaiser calls for all parties conference to address national issues

He emphasized that political stability was essential for economic activity and sustainable development, warning that continued uncertainty was damaging investor confidence and public trust

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has stressed the need for an All Parties Conference (APC) to address pressing national issues, restore real democracy and ensure political stability in the country. Talking to media in Peshawar, Asad Qaiser said the overall situation of the country was not good and Pakistan was facing serious political and economic challenges. He emphasized that political stability was essential for economic activity and sustainable development, warning that continued uncertainty was damaging investor confidence and public trust. The PTI leader said that Pakistan needed "real democracy" where the mandate of the people is respected and institutions function within their constitutional limits.

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Top 10% of earners take 42% of Pakistan's income

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Inequality in Pakistan remains pronounced, with the top 10% of earners taking 42% of total income, while the bottom 50% receive just 19%, according to the World Inequality Report 2026. Published by the World Inequality Lab (WIL), a Paris-based research centre, the report said wealth in Pakistan is even more concentrated, with the richest 10% holding 59% of total wealth and the top 1.0% controlling 24%. Pakistan's average income per capita stands at about 4,200 euros (purchasing power parity), while average wealth is 15,700 euros (PPP). The report noted only a slight narrowing of the income gap between the top 10% and the bottom 50%, from 22 to 21.4, between 2014 and 2024. Female labour force participation also declined, falling from 9.8% to 8.5%. "Overall, income and wealth are highly concentrated in Pakistan, with persistent gender disparities and only minor shifts in inequality trends,"

Continued on Page 06

President calls for stronger ties with Ireland

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Mariam Madiha Aftab, Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Ireland, called on President Asif Ali Zardari today at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President congratulated her on her appointment and expressed confidence that she would work to strengthen Pakistan-Ireland relations, with a focus on building a strong economic partnership. He stressed the need to expand cooperation in trade and investment as well as in sustainable development, climate change, critical and emerging

Continued on Page 06

Former Punjab CM Manzoor Wattoo passes away



BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Former Punjab chief minister and speaker Manzoor Wattoo has passed away, his family confirmed on Tuesday. Born on August 14, 1939, Wattoo began his political career in 1983 after being elected chairman of the Okara District Council. Two years later, in 1985, he entered the Punjab Assembly as a member and was chosen as its speaker. Wattoo returned to the Punjab Assembly in 1988 as an independent legislator and subsequently aligned himself with Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League,

Continued on Page 06

At least two killed in attack on polio team

DNA

PESHAWAR: At least two people, including a constable, were killed after unidentified assailants attacked a polio team in the Salarzai tehsil of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district, the police said, as the nationwide polio campaign entered its second day. The attack comes a day after the government launched the final polio campaign of 2025, which is set to run until December 21. Public Relations Officer (PRO) police,

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan renews pledge against terrorism on APS attack anniversary

President Zardari, PM Shehbaz reaffirm nation's resolve to eliminate terrorism from country

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The country is observing the 11th anniversary of the 2014 Army Public School (APS) attack in Peshawar today (Tuesday), with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari reaffirming the nation's resolve to combat terrorism and paid tribute to the victims of one of the deadliest school attacks in modern history. The heinous attack claimed the lives of 147 innocent students and teachers on December 16, 2014, and remains the bloodiest and most painful in the country's history, as six terrorists wearing military uniforms entered the school premises and indiscriminately fired at students, teachers and staff. At least 147 people, including 122 students, embraced martyrdom, while the school's principal, Tahira Qazi and teacher Sofia Hijab were also martyred in the attack. President Asif Ali Zardari, in a statement issued on the 11th anniversary of the tragedy, said that Pakistan's commitment to defeating terrorism was absolute and reiterated that there could be no soft corner for terrorists or those who supported, financed, sheltered or justified them. "There can be no negotiations with those who raise arms against the state or target our children," the president said.

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Afghan health minister in India for talks

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Afghanistan's Minister for Public Health Noor Jalal Jalali on Tuesday reached the Indian capital of New Delhi on an official visit, the country's health ministry said. The visit marks the third by an Afghan official in the last three months, after Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and Industry Minister Nooruddin Azizi visited New Delhi. "The multi-day visit aims to strengthen bilateral health cooperation, promote the exchange of experience, and coordinate joint efforts," said the Afghan health ministry. According to the statement, Jalali is to hold separate meetings with Indian officials, particularly health authorities, and take part in several organised programmes. "Discussions will also focus on capacity-building opportunities for Afghan health workers, the import of quality medicines into Afghanistan, medical equipment, and other related issues," it said.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari talking to Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Ireland, Ms Mariam Madiha Aftab, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. — DNA

Australian beach tragedy

Police confirm gunman was originally from Southern part of India

Hyderabad is the capital of Telangana state. Australian police said both men had travelled to the Philippines last month, the father on an Indian passport and the son on an Australian one

CENTRELINE REPORT

SYDNEY: Indian police said on Tuesday that one of the gunmen in Australia's Bondi Beach shooting, Sajid Akram, was originally from the southern Indian city of Hyderabad but had limited contact with his family in India. The death toll in one of Australia's worst mass shootings stands at 16, including 50-year-old Akram, who was shot by police. The man's 24-year-old son and alleged accomplice, identified by local media as Naveed Akram, was in critical condition in hospital after also being shot. Hyderabad is the capital of Telangana state. Australian police said both men had travelled to the Philippines last month, the father on an Indian passport and the son on an Australian one. "The family members have expressed no knowledge of his radical mindset or activities, nor of the circumstances that led to his radicalisation," Telangana state police said in a statement. The purpose of the trip is under investigation, officials said, adding it was not conclusive whether they were linked to any terrorist group or whether

Continued on Page 06

Bondi Beach hero becomes source of pride

APP

ALNAYRAB: Bondi Beach hero Ahmed al Ahmed, who put his life on the line by wresting a gun from an attacker in Australia's deadly mass shooting, has become a source of pride for his hometown in Syria. "His act is a source of pride for us and for Syria," Ahmed's uncle Mohammed, a farmer, told AFP in the town of Al-Nayrab. Ahmed, a fruit seller and father of two children, emigrated to Australia from Syria in 2007, 60-year-old Mohammed said. On Sunday, 44-year-old Ahmed became a hero when he intercepted an attack on a gathering for a Jewish festival marking the start of Hanukkah. The attackers killed 15 people,

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Rs 860 million uplift package for minority communities in KP

He emphasized that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues to lead other provinces in terms of good governance. On the occasion, the CM's Focal Person for Minority Affairs, Wazir Zada, expressed gratitude to the provincial government for approving the development package and allocating substantial funds, stating that these initiatives will significantly benefit minority communities across the province

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Information and Public Relations, Shafi Jan, had said that the provincial government is implementing landmark measures to protect the rights of minority communities while promoting their development and overall welfare. He said that Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi, has approved a comprehensive development package worth Rs. 860 million for minority communities across the province. He expressed these views in a video message alongside the Chief Minister's Focal Person for Minority Affairs, Wazir Zada Shafi Jan said that the provincial government is taking serious and practical steps to improve education, enhance employment opportunities and upgrade places of worship for minority communities. Providing further details, he said that Rs. 80 million

has been allocated for scholarships for minority students from matriculation to PhD level. Additionally, Rs 200 million has been approved to support preparation for competitive examinations such as CSS and PMS, along with skills development programs for minority youth. Shafi Jan stated that Rs 300 million has been earmarked to promote inter-faith harmony, community exchange programs, and the organization of religious festivals of minority communities. Furthermore, Rs 100 million has been allocated for the renovation of places of worship in the merged districts, while Rs 70 million has been set aside for the repair and improvement of places of worship in the settled districts. Shafi Jan further stated that Rs 100 million has been approved for the repair and rehabilitation of cremation grounds and graveyards. Highlighting other ongoing initiatives, he said

that construction and rehabilitation work on places of worship and minority colonies is currently underway at a cost of Rs 410 million, reflecting the provincial government's strong commitment to minority welfare. The Special Assistant noted that a two percent quota has been reserved for minority students in all educational institutions, while full implementation of a five percent job quota for minorities in government departments is being ensured. He emphasized that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues to lead other provinces in terms of good governance. On the occasion, the CM's Focal Person for Minority Affairs, Wazir Zada, expressed gratitude to the provincial government for approving the development package and allocating substantial funds, stating that these initiatives will significantly benefit minority communities across the province.—APP



Lahore: Principal Information Officer Mubashir Hassan along with DG PID Lahore Shafqat Abbas Khan held a meeting on the welfare of journalistic community with the Governing body of Lahore Press Club under the leadership of Arshad Ansari, President LPC.

Balochistan adopts hydroponics to transform agriculture

QUETTA: In a landmark move to modernize agriculture and tackle severe water scarcity, the Balochistan government has approved the introduction of hydroponics technology across the province. The decision was finalized during a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP), chaired by Chief Minister (CM) Mir Sarfraz Bugti at the Chief Minister's Secretariat on Tuesday. The meeting, attended by parliamentary leaders from coalition parties, provincial ministers, and senior officials, endorsed a major project to establish hydroponic facilities and promote horticulture. The committee agreed that hydroponics—an advanced farming system that uses minimal water while delivering higher yields—is ideally suited for Balochistan's arid climate. In the pilot phase, the project will begin in ten districts as successful results will pave the way for province-wide adoption. — APP

Skills training vital to reducing unemployment: Ahmad

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has emphasized that equipping youth with practical skills is the only sustainable solution to unemployment. He said that neither government nor private sector efforts alone can provide jobs for all young people. He added that unemployment was a growing concern, with even degree-holding youth frequently unable to secure employment. The speaker made these remarks while addressing the first annual convocation under the Chief Minister Punjab Skilled Program

for TEVTA (Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority) hospitality pass-outs, held at a private hotel, here on Tuesday. He said that with 70 percent of the population seeking employment, only two percent can realistically be provided jobs at the government level, making skill development indispensable. Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan also stressed the importance of promoting Urdu in technical education to preserve the national language. He highlighted that rural youth have been serving the country for decades and should be included in

national institutions, urging TEVTA to expand technical education at district and tehsil levels. He said that TEVTA has so far trained 200,000 youth and facilitated employment, adding that the hospitality sector offers vast opportunities for career growth. On the occasion, TEVTA Chairman Brigadier (R) Muhammad Sajid Khokhar said TEVTA provides technical education of international standards, including practical training through partnerships with hotels, and has introduced a diploma program in hospitality.— APP

RDA inflows rise to \$11.494b in Nov

ISLAMABAD: The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) has risen to US \$11.494 billion by the end of November 2025, as compared to US \$11.313 billion by October 2025) end.

The data showed that the inflows of remittances during November were recorded at US\$181 million as compared to US\$205 million in October and US\$196 million in September 2025, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan. The number of accounts registered under the programme also rose by 9,572 to 883,037 in November 2025 from 873,465 accounts in October 2025.

By the end of October, overseas Pakistanis have invested US \$496 million in Naya Pakistan Certificates, US \$1,013 million in Naya Pakistan Islamic Certificates, and US \$100 million in Roshan Equity Investment.—APP

Pak progressing rapidly by govt cohesive policies: Gilani

MULTAN: Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani said the country was achieving substantial progress under coordinated domestic and foreign policy of the government while establishing positive image worldwide. Speaking to PPP's local leaders, administrative officials with media personnels at his farmhouse in Miranpur here on Tuesday, he said the country's defense was in strong hands, adding that those who tried earlier to obstruct the economy for personal gains had met their just end along with their facilitators. Gilani highlighted the historic sacrifices of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for promotion of democracy with development and security of the nation. He underlined PPP's

founder, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto role for giving the country a constitution, and said today it's been well protected by his grandson, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. According to him, Bilawal is on toe of protecting legacy of his grandfather and mother. He emphasized that those who incited the nation, especially youth against state institutions in the name of democracy were insincere to the nation. He praised sacrifices of Pakistan Army in defending the homeland, noting that Pakistan remained a cradle of peace due to their professional skills and dedication. He added that the world recognized courage and capabilities of the armed forces. The Senate Chairman further said that for the country's construction,

development, and stability, the PPP, PML-N, and allied parties got united on a common platform. He urged all patriots and democracy supporters to play a positive role in establishing Pakistan's exemplary image. Gilani stated that the country was currently progressing rapidly and that the government taking serious steps for development of South Punjab. Ongoing mega projects at the grassroots level aimed to completely eliminate regional backwardness, he said. Commissioner Dera Ghazi Khan Division Muhammad Ashfaq Chaudhry, RPO Dera Ghazi Khan Muhammad Azhar Akram, Deputy Commissioner Rajanpur Muhammad Imran and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.—APP

National gemstones policy finalized to enhance exports

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review and finalize the National Gemstones Policy, aimed at unlocking the vast untapped potential of Pakistan's gemstones sector. During the meeting, specialized working groups on Import-Export, Banking and Finance, and Return & Refund Policies presented their recommendations for inclusion in the policy framework, said a news release. Haroon said that, following extensive consultations with experts, the policy and quality standards have been aligned with international benchmarks. In line with the vision of Prime Minister, the policy focuses on accelerating growth, promoting value addition, and transforming the gemstones industry into a competitive export-oriented sector. He emphasized that there is a strong consensus that Pakistan can emerge as a leader in the global gems and jewelry market. Highlighting existing challenges, the SAPM noted that the gemstones sector currently suffers from high wastage, limited value addition, and declining exports. Due to unscientific extraction and processing methods, up to 50 percent wastage occurs at various stages. Despite enormous potential, gemstone exports have remained limited to \$ 5-7 million in recent years. Haroon Akhtar underscored that, following stakeholder consultations, formalization and documentation of the entire gemstones value chain has been made a top priority of the policy. To stimulate growth, the government will provide targeted financing, streamlined facilitation, and smart incentives for the sector. — APP

COURT NOTICE


IN THE COURT SHAMAAS AHMED JUDGE CIVIL/Family COURT RAWALPINDI
Suit For Dissolution Marriage on the basis of Khuliah Kiran Nisar Versus Yasir Abbasi Notice to Yasir Abbasi s/o Fayyaz Muhammad Abbasi R/o House No. 348, Street No. 9, Mohallah Sadiqabad Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 19-12-2025 at 9 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Sindh cabinet okays several uplift projects

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, presiding over a cabinet meeting, approved a wide-ranging financial and development package covering public transport, policing, wheat price relief, Thar coal connectivity, internal audit reforms, social protection, and the establishment of an IT Tower in the city. The meeting, held at CM House on Tuesday, was attended by provincial ministers, advisers, special assistants, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Principal Secretary to CM Agha Wasif and other concerned officers. It also confirmed the minutes of the Cabinet Committee on Finance presented by Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah. Among the major approvals, the cabinet sanctioned Rs964.4 million for the procurement and operation of public transport buses under a non-ADP scheme, Rs1 billion for the production of films, dramas and documentaries for public awareness, and

Rs5.84 billion for the procurement of arms and ammunition to strengthen the capacity of Sindh Police. The cabinet also approved funds for sports events, including assistance for the IMC Over-40s T20 Cricket World Cup, grants for SOS Children's Village in Tharparkar, establishment of a Project Implementation Unit under STEVTA, creation of posts in newly established colleges, procurement of vehicles for Sindh Prisons, and support for cultural initiatives, including the 10th Adab Festival. Additionally, funds were cleared for emergency water supply schemes in Malir, construction of an additional ramp at Korangi Causeway, renovation of a government girls' school in Saddar, and hosting of the 2nd Joint CPA Asia and CPA South-East Asia Regional Conference at the Sindh Assembly. The chief minister directed all departments to ensure the timely utilisation of funds and strict adherence to transparency

and financial discipline. The Sindh Cabinet approved a revision of the Wheat Release Policy for 2025-26, allowing the immediate release of government wheat at an issue price of Rs8,000 per 100 kg bag to flour mills, chakkies, and traders, thereby reducing the price from Rs9,500 per 100 kg. The decision aims to ensure market stability. The CM noted that early release would help maintain wheat quality, free up storage space and support affordable flour prices for the public. A sub-committee was constituted to closely monitor wheat prices and, if required, recommend adjustments to the government wheat issue price for cabinet consideration. The Sindh Cabinet approved the Regulatory Framework for Internal Audit under the Sindh Public Finance Administration Act, 2020, aimed at strengthening financial discipline, transparency and governance across government departments. — APP




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GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY
(PROCUREMENT & CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION SECTION)



URAA
پاکستان

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

December 17, 2025

Islamic Republic of Pakistan Improvement and Widening of Chakdara – Chitral Road Project (N-45), Section III: Kalkatak – Chitral (48km) EDCF Loan No. PAK-8

Reference: IFB Notice for the subject works already published in National Dailies dated May 29, 2024 vide PIDNO.PID(I)7336/23 is hereby Annulled and is being Re-Tendered

- The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has received a Loan from the **Export-Import Bank of Korea** from the resources of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of the Republic of Korea in the amount of Ninety Three Million and Seven Hundred Seventy Nine Thousand US Dollars (US\$ 93,779,000) toward the cost of Improvement and Widening of Chakdara – Chitral Road Project (N-45), Section III: Kalkatak – Chitral (48km) and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for Construction Works for Improvement and Widening of Chakdara – Chitral Road Project (N-45), Section III: Kalkatak – Chitral (48km), Contract No. EDCF/PAK-8.
- National Highway Authority now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the project comprising of followings:
 - Construction of Main Road: L=48 km (2 lanes)
 - Pavement: 19,971 m³ of asphalt concrete wearing
 - Bridges, Box and Pipe Culverts, and Drainage Facilities
 - Slope Stabilization: 1,290 nos. of ground anchor and 1,044 nos. of rock bolt
 - At-grade Intersections and Miscellaneous Works
- Bidding will be conducted through Competitive Bidding (CB) procedures specified in the Guideline for Procurement under EDCF Loans, and is open to all eligible bidders that meet the following minimum qualification criteria.
 - The bidder can be:
 - A firm that is incorporated and, registered in the Republic of Korea
 - A joint venture (JV) consisting of one or more firms incorporated and registered in the Republic of Korea holding more than 50% of shares or have the de facto decision-making rights, in combination with Pakistani firm that is registered with the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in **Category C-A** with specialization in **CE-01** and **CE-02**.
 - Korean Firms has the option to enter in Joint Venture(JV) with Pakistani Firm(s). However, the formation of JV is not mandatory.
- General construction experience in road and/or bridges; Participation in at least one contract that has been successfully or substantially completed within the last seven (07) years and that is similar to the proposed works, where the value of the Bidder's participation exceeds US \$18.500 Million.
Minimum Key Activities that shall be considered as part of experience are:
 - Formation of Embankment (45,000 Cu.m at one project)
 - Asphaltic Concrete Pavement (5,000 Cu.m at one project)
 - Concrete for Bridges (650 Sq.m at one project)
 - Ground Anchor and/or Rock Bolt (250 each at one project)

The similarity of the Bidder's participation shall be based on the physical size, nature of works, complexity, methods, technology or other characteristics as described in Section 6, Work Requirements.

- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from National Highway Authority (NHA) and inspect the bidding documents at the address mentioned below from 09:00 to 16:00 hours.
- A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PKR 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand) by Pay Order/Demand Draft in favor of National Highway Authority. The document will be available to pick up from the office stipulated in BDS during the working time from Monday to Friday except public holiday. The document can also be airmail for overseas delivery to the International Bidder at their Office Address on official request enclosed with covering letter and upon advance payment of a Non-Refundable fee of USD \$200/- (Last Date to purchase bidding documents for overseas delivery shall be 14 days prior to deadline of in hand purchasing during the working time from Monday to Friday except public holiday).
- The Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before **1100 AM, February 02, 2026**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of US\$ 462,262/- (Four Hundred Sixty-Two Thousand Two Hundred Sixty-Two US Dollars) or PKR 128.702 Million (One Hundred Twenty-Eight Million Seven Hundred Two Thousand Four Hundred Seventy-Seven). Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below at **1130 AM, February 02, 2026**.
- The National Highway Authority (NHA) will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of Bids.

National Highway Authority (NHA)
General Manager (P&CA)
28-Mauve Area, Sector G-9/1, Islamabad, Pakistan
Tel: +92-51-9032727, Facsimile: +92-51-9260419 & E-mail: gmpca@gmail.com

منظوط شاپر این محفوظ پاکستان

National Days and Armed Forces Days

DECEMBER

Dec 01/Romania National Day

Dec 02/United Arab Emirates National Day

Dec 02/Laos Republic National Day

Dec 05/Thailand National Day

Dec 06/Finland Independence Day

Dec 07/India Armed Forces Flag Day

Dec 09/Tanzania National Day

Dec 11/Oman Armed Forces Day

Dec 12/Kenya Independence Day

Dec12/Turkmenistan Neutrality Day

Dec 16/Bahrain National Day


Dec 16/Kazakhstan Independence Day

Dec 18/Qatar National Day

Dec 18/Niger National Day

Dec 23/Philippines Armed Forces Day

Dec 23/Japan National Day



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

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


Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114


PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Canth Hospital.....9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4


RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43


CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

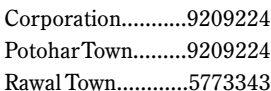


Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343



Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

CDA chief, Yemen envoy discuss enhanced coop

Yemeni Ambassador appreciated the initiatives undertaken by CDA for the beautification and development of the Federal Capital, Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, met with the Ambassador of Yemen, Mohammed Motahar Alashabi, on Tuesday at the CDA Headquarters. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and ways to further enhance cooperation were discussed. During the meeting, Yemeni Ambassador expressed his deep and heartfelt attachment to Pakistan. He said that he holds its brotherly country Pakistan in the highest regard and respect. He appreciated the initiatives undertaken by CDA for the beautification and development of the Federal Capital, Islamabad. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that comprehensive measures are being taken for the development of Islamabad and to further enhance its beauty. During the meeting, the possibility of relocating embassies and diplomatic missions to the Diplomatic Enclave was also discussed. The Ambassador expressed his keen interest in relocating the Embassy of Yemen to the Diplomatic Enclave. He discussed the possibility of shifting the Yemen Embassy into the Diplomatic Enclave. Chairman CDA assured full cooperation and facilitation regarding the relocation of the embassy to the Diplomatic Enclave and said that full cooperation would be provided in all matters related to the shifting of the embassy within the Diplomatic Enclave. Chairman CDA



further said that steps are being taken for the upgradation and further beautification of the Diplomatic Enclave. He

added that along with beautification, recreational and sports facilities are also being enhanced within the enclave.

On this occasion, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening relations and mutual cooperation.

ITA issues 6,254 emission stickers so far

ISLAMABAD The Islamabad Transport Authority (ITA) on Tuesday released a 15-day performance report under its vehicle emission testing drive, showing inspections of 6,254 vehicles, issuance of 6,254 emission stickers, and action against 12 smoke-emitting vehicles. In the last 24 hours, teams issued 486 stickers during inspections across the city. The campaign is part of ongoing efforts to limit air pollution through regular checks, roadside action, and expanded inspection points. The ITA said the vehicle emission testing system remains active across Islamabad with daily inspections and enforcement against vehicles found releasing smoke. The authority shared details of inspections, sticker issuance, and enforcement steps taken during the past 15 days, highlighting progress and future plans to improve access for citizens. According to the report, inspection teams checked 6,254 vehicles over the 15-day period and issued emission stickers to vehicles that met the required standards. These stickers confirm that a vehicle has passed

emission checks and can operate on city roads. In the last 24 hours alone, teams inspected vehicles at multiple locations and issued 486 emission stickers, showing steady daily activity. The authority also reported enforcement actions against vehicles found emitting smoke. During different operations, 12 vehicles were taken to police stations for further action under the relevant rules. Officials said these steps are meant to ensure compliance and discourage the use of vehicles that contribute to air pollution. ITA spokesperson said inspection teams are continuing checks across the city. He said teams are deployed on major roads and busy areas to identify vehicles that release smoke and to guide drivers on emission testing requirements. He added that the inspection process is being carried out regularly to cover more areas and maintain continuity. The report noted that roadside operations are ongoing on different highways and main roads. These operations focus on checking vehicle emissions, issuing stickers to compliant vehicles, and taking action

against those that fail to meet the standards. Officials said the presence of teams on key routes helps improve coverage and allows quick checks during peak traffic hours. The report also highlighted coordination among inspection teams working in different sectors of Islamabad. Teams are assigned routes and schedules to ensure citywide coverage. This approach, the authority said, allows inspections to continue without interruption and helps collect daily data on vehicle compliance. During the reporting period, teams focused on awareness alongside enforcement. Drivers were informed about the importance of emission testing and the process for obtaining stickers. Officials said guidance at inspection points helps drivers understand requirements and encourages voluntary compliance. The authority also urged vehicle owners to cooperate with inspection teams and ensure their vehicles undergo emission testing. Officials said compliance helps reduce pollution and supports public health goals.—DNA

EECP as non-invasive life-saving option for cardiac patients

ISLAMABAD: Senior cardiologist, Dr Raja Mehdi Hassan has highlighted Enhanced External Counterpulsation (EECP) therapy as an effective, non-invasive treatment for heart patients, particularly those with chronic angina, heart failure, or post-heart attack complications. Talking to APP here on Tuesday, he said that cardiovascular diseases are increasing rapidly in Pakistan due to unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyles,

and delayed diagnosis. "Many patients suffer fatal heart attacks during their first episode, with younger adults at higher risk due to underdeveloped collateral blood vessels", he added. Dr Mehdi explained that arterial blockages develop gradually, often beginning in early childhood, as fats and calcium accumulate in arterial walls. He said that most patients remain symptom-free until blockages exceed 70 per cent, after which chest pain,

breathlessness, and fatigue appear. He noted that early screening, including lipid profile, blood pressure, blood sugar and Body Mass Index (BMI) is crucial for prevention. Conventional treatment options include medications, angioplasty with stenting, and coronary artery bypass surgery, he said adding that some patients are either unfit for surgery, elderly, or reluctant to undergo invasive procedures.—APP

Shaza spotlighted in Gov insider for driving digital reforms

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's digital transformation journey received a major international endorsement, as GovInsider featured Pakistan's Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, in its prestigious "Meet the Women in GovTech 2025" series. The GovInsider put the spotlight on the country's digital transformation and highlights a Pakistani woman at the forefront of the government's drive, said a press release issued here Tuesday. GovInsider, one of the world's most influential publications covering government innovation and public-sector technology, followed by global policymakers and technology experts, highlights only initiatives that show real impact and clear progress. Ms. Khawaja's interview marks an important moment for Pakistan, indicating growing international attention to the country's efforts to modernise government services, expand digital access, and develop a technology-driven economy under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Digital Pakistan vision, it further said. In her interview with GovInsider, Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja explained Pakistan's approach to digital transformation. She described Paki-

stan's digital reform process as practical and evidencebased. The policies are shaped by lessons from other countries, consultations with sector experts who work directly with citizens, and input from both federal and provincial stakeholders. Most importantly, she emphasised that Pakistan's digital policies are designed with the least advantaged citizens in mind; ensuring reforms reach women, rural populations, low-income households, and people with disabilities, the press release said. The minister highlighted the Digital Economy Enhancement Project (DEEP) as the backbone of Pakistan's digital future. The initiative is building a national digital stack comprising secure data exchange, digital identity, and a universal payment interface – foundational systems intended to expand access to formal services, improve governance efficiency, and unlock innovation across the economy. Enabled by the Digital Nation Pakistan Act, 2025, and the newly approved National Artificial Intelligence Policy, DEEP represents one of the most ambitious digital governance initiatives in the country's history. A key milestone discussed in the interview was the rapid transition of Pakistan's federal govern-

ment to a paperless system through the rollout of E-Office across ministries and departments. Within a year, the federal administration has moved to digital workflows that enhances transparency, enabling real-time oversight, and generating measurable savings for the public exchequer. The reform aligns closely with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's emphasis on efficiency, accountability, and sustainability in governance. Connectivity emerged as another central theme of the conversation. The minister shared how the expansion of fibre and 4G networks into remote areas has already transformed education outcomes, particularly for girls. Digital access has enabled rural teachers and students to connect with national curricula, online learning platforms, and university pathways that were once limited to urban centres – a shift she described as one of the most powerful illustrations of technology's social impact. Looking to the future, Khawaja spoke about the role of artificial intelligence in making government services more accessible and trustworthy. Pakistan is exploring multilingual, AI-powered citizen interfaces that operate across voice, messaging platforms.—APP

MNA meets BoI minister to discuss overall eco situation

ISLAMABAD: Member of the National Assembly, Malik Shakir Bashir Awan, called on the Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BoI), Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh for discussing overall economic situation in the country on Tuesday. During the meeting, the overall national situation and the improving economic indicators were discussed in detail, said a release issued here. Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh stated that Pakistan's economic outlook is strengthening due to consistent reforms and a stable policy framework under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose vision prioritizes investment-led growth and economic stability. MNA Malik Shakir Bashir Awan appreciated the proactive role of Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh in promoting investment, particularly highlighting the impact of the Business Facilitation Council (BFC) and the Asaan Karobar Act in improving the investment climate. The Federal Minister emphasized that BFC is providing investors with a one-window facilitation mechanism, significantly reducing procedural hurdles. He further noted that recent regulatory reforms are crucial for enhancing investor confidence and boosting business activity across the country. Highlighting government priorities, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh stated that this is the best time to invest in Pakistan, as the government continues to pursue policy continuity and business-friendly reforms to attract both domestic and foreign investors, in line with the vision set by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The Federal Minister also underlined that creating business and investment opportunities for the youth is essential for national economic growth, adding that entrepreneurship plays a key role in sustainable development. MNA Malik Shakir Bashir Awan extended an invitation to the Federal Minister to visit the Khushab and Sargodha Chambers of Commerce to further strengthen engagement with the business community.—DNA

UHC central to Pakistan's health, population reforms: Kamal

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday said that achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) was a cornerstone of the government's national development strategy, as Pakistan stood at a critical and challenging demographic juncture. The Minister emphasized that policy commitments must be translated into tangible and measurable health outcomes for all Pakistanis. He was chairing a joint meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Health and Population Council and the Universal Health Coverage Country Platform, organized by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination with the support of the British High Commission and the World Health Organization (WHO). The meeting aimed to harmonize national, provincial and development partner investments, with a focus on evidence-informed strategic and programmatic reforms, while ensuring coherence across health and population programmes and initiatives. The minister said the prevailing demographic situation was impacting every aspect of national development, particularly the health and population sectors. He said the upcoming National Health and Population Policy (2026–2035) would serve as a strategic compass to guide reforms and policy implementation. "Health is not merely a sectoral issue, it is a foundational investment in human capital and economic stability," he stated, adding that the policy provided a practical, evidence-based and action-oriented roadmap for the future. Syed Mustafa Kamal said the policy charted a clear path toward a healthier, more empowered and resilient population, while reflecting Pakistan's national commitment to demographic resilience, gender equality and social justice. He stressed the need for sustained political will and collaborative action to ensure effective implementation. Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for National Health Services Dr Mukhtar Bharath said that local vaccine production was a strategic investment in national health security and a critical step toward self-reliance and sustainable development. He said achieving the World Health Organization's Maturity Level-3 was essential to ensure regulatory systems met global standards of quality, safety and efficacy, enabling locally produced vaccines to gain international confidence and market access. Dr Mukhtar Bharath further stated that drafting a National Health Insurance Act with provincial consensus was imperative to guarantee equitable access to life-saving products, strengthen pooled healthcare financing and ensure the long-term sustainability of the health system. He said these measures would protect the population, reduce dependence on imports and position Pakistan as a credible contributor to global health resilience. Punjab Health and Population Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir said population dynamics were closely linked to sustainable development, adding that managing population growth was not merely a demographic goal but a critical determinant of health, education and economic prosperity. He said addressing health and population priorities was essential to achieving equitable and sustainable development for all segments of society. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Khaleeq ur Rehman said health was the foundation of a prosperous and peaceful society, stressing the need to strengthen primary healthcare infrastructure, expand digital health services in remote areas and increase investment in the health workforce to ensure no citizen was left behind. The meeting was attended by provincial and federating area health and population ministers and secretaries, along with health development partners, representatives of UN agencies, academia, regulatory entities and other health and population stakeholders. The meeting concluded with a collective reaffirmation to deepen collaboration, synchronize resources and accelerate reforms under the overarching vision of the National Health and Population Policy, with participants stressing the need to ensure access to quality and affordable healthcare for every citizen without financial hardship.—DNA

PNCA showcases calligraphic talent students' exhibition

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Tuesday inaugurated the NOOR-E-QALAM Calligraphy Students' Exhibition at the National Art Gallery, presenting a refined collection of works created by students of a six-month calligraphy course. The exhibition was formally inaugurated by Farha Naz Akber, Parliamentary Secretary, National Heritage and Culture Division, who lauded the artistic quality and spiritual depth reflected in the students' work. She said the elegant depiction of Quranic verses and the artistic rendering of the beautiful names of Allah demonstrate the students' dedication, discipline, and growing mastery of the traditional art form. Expressing her appreciation, the chief guest noted that initiatives like NOOR-E-QALAM play a vital role in preserving Pakistan's rich cultural and artistic heritage. She voiced confidence that the young calligraphers would go on to represent Pakistan at national and international platforms through their creative excellence. Farha Naz Akber also acknowledged the efforts of Class Coordinator Ms. Noshaba Naz for effectively organizing the course and exhibition, and commended Instructor Mr Shabbir Ahmed Zia for his guidance and mentorship in honing the students' calligraphic skills. The NOOR-E-QALAM Calligraphy Exhibition will remain open to the public at the National Art Gallery, PNCA, from December 16 to December 22.—APP

Two held for abuse of eight-year-old in Wah

RAWALPINDI: The Wah Sadder Police on Tuesday arrested two suspects accused of abusing an eight-year-old boy, a Rawalpindi Police spokesman said. He said the mother of the victim had complained, alleging that the suspects had abused her son. The spokesman said the Wah Sadder Police immediately registered a case and apprehended the accused. Superintendent of Police (SP) Potohar Talha Wali directed the Wah Sadder Police to challan the suspects before the court with solid evidence to ensure their conviction and appropriate punishment. The spokesman added that the police were continuing inquiries into the case to complete legal formalities.—APP

Briefs

**Pak, Tajikistan
unite for
historic
cultural festival
in Islamabad**

ISLAMABAD: In an unprecedented celebration of friendship and shared heritage, Pakistan and Tajikistan are joining forces to host their first-ever collaborative cultural festival at Lok Virsa on December 19-20.

This landmark event marks a defining moment in cultural diplomacy between the two nations, showcasing the rich traditions, artistic excellence, and culinary treasures that define both countries.

The Pak-Tajik Cultural Festival 2025, organized by the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) in partnership with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) and the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, represents a significant milestone in strengthening bilateral ties through cultural exchange.

The Tajikistan Ambassador's recent visit to Lok Virsa to finalize festival preparations underscored the productive collaboration and robust cultural cooperation between the two nations.

The two-day celebration will transform Lok Virsa into a vibrant hub of cross-cultural exchange, bringing together artists, artisans, and audiences for an immersive experience. From noon to 8 PM daily, visitors will enjoy live artisan demonstrations showcasing traditional craftsmanship techniques, captivating performances of traditional music, dance, and theatre, and authentic Pakistani and Tajik cuisine at ethnic food stalls.—APP

**Faiz-Niazi
nexus pushed
nation into
darkness, stole
youth's dreams**

ISLAMABAD: Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, held a press conference at the Press Information Department here on Tuesday. Addressing the media, he emphasized that the government remains firmly committed to shaping the future of Pakistan's youth by guiding them towards positive and productive avenues. Rana Mashhood strongly condemned the "Faiz-Niazi nexus," accusing it of undermining national stability, obstructing development, and deliberately attempting to jeopardize the future of the country's younger generation. Addressing journalists and all media representatives, Rana Mashhood said youth empowerment remains central to the government's vision for a stable and prosperous Pakistan. He said constructive engagement of young people is being prioritized to counter despair and misinformation that previously pushed many towards uncertainty and frustration. Rana said focused investment is being made in technical and vocational education, science and technology, information technology, agriculture.—APP

COP-30: Delivery, not discussion, experts agree

The event was moderated by Talha Tufail Bhatti, ARO Climate Governance, Policy and Food Security Program. He highlighted that post-COP discussions are critical to connect global climate commitments with local realities

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) convened the inaugural post-COP30 seminar to examine the outcomes of the UN climate conference held in Belém, Brazil, and its implications for Pakistan and other climate-vulnerable countries. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem opened the discussion by highlighting Pakistan's disproportionate exposure to climate risks despite contributing less than 1% to global greenhouse gas emissions. He spoke about shrinking glaciers, increased water scarcity, deforestation, and worsening air pollution. He noted that cities like Lahore now rank among the most polluted globally. He also emphasized that fossil fuel consumption continues to dominate global energy use, while non-fossil sources remain far lower. While acknowledging Pakistan's progress in solar energy, especially micro-solar initiatives, he stressed that resilience alone is insufficient without measured finance and implementation. Ms. Zainab Naem, Associate Research Fellow, SDPI, described COP as an important diplomatic space shaped as much by politics as by science. She highlighted discussions on transitioning away from fossil fuels, deforestation, and mitigating black carbon, a short-lived but highly dangerous pollutant from biomass and crop residue burning. Hamza Haroon, Regional Director of South Asia for Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF-V20) focused on climate finance and adaptation and highlighted the mismatch between climate losses and available funding. He noted that while new financing windows offer USD \$150 to 250



million, these amounts are inadequate compared to losses from climate disasters worth tens of billions. Tahanyat Satti, negotiator at UNFCCC, stressed the importance of

continuity in negotiations and warned that frequent changes in negotiators weaken developing countries' positions. The event was moderated by Talha Tufail Bhatti, ARO

Climate Governance, Policy and Food Security Program. He highlighted that post-COP discussions are critical to connect global climate commitments with local realities.

Naqvi pays glowing tribute to APS martyrs

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday paid rich tribute to the innocent martyrs of the Army Public School (APS) tragedy, describing their sacrifice as a defining moment in Pakistan's fight against terrorism. In a statement, the interior minister saluted the courage, resolve and unmatched sacrifice of the brave students who lost their lives in the horrific attack. He said the APS tragedy remains one of the darkest and most painful chapters in Pakistan's history, exposing the brutal and inhuman face of terrorism to the entire world. Recalling the events of December 16, 2014, Mohsin Naqvi said that terrorists mercilessly targeted innocent children in a direct attack on the State of Pakistan and the future of the nation. He added that the supreme sacrifice of the APS martyrs showed Pakistan a clear, decisive and unwavering national path against terrorism. "The sacred blood of the martyrs permanently sealed the decision that there is no room left for ambiguity or compromise in the fight against terrorism," he said. The interior minister noted that it was on the basis of this national resolve that the state launched comprehensive, coordinated and sustained operations against terrorism. He reaffirmed that the state has made it unequivocally clear that terrorism, regardless of its name, slogan or flag, is unacceptable in all forms. Mohsin Naqvi further stated that the complete elimination of Fitna-e-Hindustan and its facilitators is a clear and final decision of the state. He emphasized that Pakistan's firm and unambiguous declaration is that the war against terrorism will be taken to its logical conclusion. He concluded by reiterating that the nation will always remember the APS martyrs, whose sacrifice continues to guide Pakistan's resolve against extremism and violence.—DNA

Effective national security policies' implementation stressed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Participants of a roundtable discussion emphasized the need for effective implementation of national security policies and developing a sustained narrative against terrorist violence. They were speaking at a roundtable discussion on the evolving counterterrorism response of Pakistan and the challenges of cross-border terrorism organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in the backdrop of the 11th anniversary of the terrorist attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar in December 2014. President IRS Ambassador Jauhar Saleem termed the 2014 APS tragedy a defining moment in Pakistan's history which paved the way for formulation of the National Action Plan (NAP) with a political consensus. He called for countering the terrorists' propaganda through a sustained counterterrorism narrative. Former National Coordinator NACTA Mr Ihsan Ghani Khan highlighted the gaps in implementation of various good policy documents, including NAP. He maintained that tactical counterterrorism had a limited scope and needed to be bolstered by strategic counterterrorism that included well-thought-out policymaking and effective policy implementation. He added that since terrorism was

a crime, the law enforcement mechanisms needed to be strengthened through the revamping of the criminal justice system which was also the last point in NAP. Pakistan's former Special Representative for Afghanistan Ambassador Asif Ali Durrani also called for adopting a unified national narrative against terrorism. He urged the strengthening of the police force as first responders in countering terrorism and called for better interagency coordination among various government agencies and departments dealing with counterterrorism. The Founder and Editor of The Khorasan Diary Mr Iftikhar Firdous said that even though APS was a tragedy in scale and scope, Pakistani policymakers needed to take even attacks targeting the school buildings and not the schoolchildren seriously because in doing that the terrorists were targeting symbols of education in the country. He called for better governance in the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to counter terrorism in those areas. The Executive Director of the Centre for Law and Security (CLAS) Mr Rehman Azhar said that Pak-Afghan border has certain unique characteristics that need to be considered when devising border security strategies. He also called for implementation of NAP and an effective counter-narrative strategy against terrorism, especially in the two provinces most affected by it. In addition, he also called for seriously addressing the terror and crime nexus in the country.

RCCI terms SBP rate cut insufficient

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has termed the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) recent policy rate cut as overdue but insufficient, stating that the reduction falls short of what is required to meaningfully revive economic activity. President RCCI, Usman Shaukat, said that while the cut is a welcome step, the business community was expecting a substantial reduction bringing the policy rate into single digits (9% or below). He noted that the current cut is marginal and ineffective in boosting local production, exports, and overall industrial growth. Usman Shaukat stressed that Pakistan's economy urgently needs a more competitive and growth-oriented interest rate regime to revive industrial activity, attract domestic and foreign investment, and enhance regional competitiveness. He recalled that in the previous Monetary Policy Committee meeting, concerns were raised about possible inflationary pressures due to floods, which ultimately did not materialize. "Given this, there was sufficient room for a deeper rate cut in the latest policy decision," he added. The RCCI President further stated that the finance minister had announced during his address at RCCI on 14 August that interest rates should be reduced, and while that commitment has now been partially fulfilled, the reduction remains too little to make a real difference for businesses struggling with high cost of capital. He expressed hope that in the upcoming monetary policy meeting, the SBP will announce a further reduction of at least 200 basis points or more, bringing the policy rate closer to single digits. Such a move, he emphasized, is critical for supporting industrial revival, export-led growth, and sustainable economic recovery.—DNA

**SP judicial
protection
reviews
security at
red zone**

ISLAMABAD: Superintendent of Police (SP) Judicial Protection Unit Muhammad Iqbal Khan visited the Red Zone and security duty points at the superior courts to review security arrangements and ensure effective performance by deployed personnel. An official told APP on Tuesday that the SP inspected security deployments and issued clear instructions to officers and officials to remain fully alert at all times and discharge their duties with professionalism and vigilance. The official said that SP Muhammad Iqbal Khan emphasised strict checking, close monitoring of entry and exit points, and immediate reporting of any suspicious activity to senior officers. He directed the deployed staff to ensure foolproof security of judges, lawyers, litigants and court premises. Under the supervision of SSP Security Syed Zeeshan Haider, security arrangements at sensitive locations, including the Red Zone and higher courts, are being continuously reviewed to maintain a robust security posture. SP Judicial Protection also stressed the importance of discipline, coordination and courteous behaviour with citizens, noting that maintaining law and order and ensuring the safety of key institutions remain a top priority of Islamabad Police.—APP

**Two killed,
one injured as
car overturns
into nullah
due to fog**

ISLAMABAD: At least two people were killed and one injured when a car plunged into a nullah after overturning due to dense fog early Tuesday morning in Okara. Rescue sources confirmed that two people lost their lives on the spot while one was injured in a tragic incident caused by dense fog, adding, the car, which overturned and plunged into a nullah, was involved in the accident, private news channel reported. Rescue teams swiftly responded to the scene, pulling the victims from the wreckage. The injured individual was immediately transferred to a nearby hospital, while the bodies of the deceased were also recovered and transported for post-mortem.—APP

Prof Aftab Hayat bids farewell

The ceremony concluded with prayers and best wishes for Professor Aftab Hayat's healthy and fulfilling post-retirement life

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A retirement reference and farewell ceremony was organized at Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) F-10/4 in honor of renowned historian Professor Aftab Hayat, who retired after more than 35 years of dedicated service in the Federal Education System. Professor Aftab Hayat joined the Federal Directorate of Education as a lecturer on November 20, 1990. During his long and distinguished career, he served at several Federal Government Colleges, including Islamabad Model Post-graduate College H-8, IMCB Nilore, IMCB H-9, and lastly IMCB F-10/4. A large number of faculty members from Federal Government Colleges across Islamabad attended the ceremony. Dr. Fida-ul-Mustafa performed the duties of stage secretary, while senior professors and colleagues paid glowing tributes to the retiring professor. Speakers highlighted his strong academic background, dedication to the discipline of history, and his commitment to



grooming generations of students. Principal IMCB F-10/4, Professor Rashid Saleem, expressed heartfelt appreciation

on behalf of the college administration and teaching staff. He praised Professor Hayat's professionalism, integrity, and lifelong

devotion to education. The ceremony concluded with prayers and best wishes for Professor Aftab Hayat's healthy and fulfilling post-retirement life.

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Extremism is the pandemic of the ‘global village’

GHASSAN CHARBEL

WARS are no longer confined to their battlegrounds. Social media has granted them the opportunity to infiltrate far-off places. It is enough for a person to look at their phone to learn about a massacre taking place thousands of kilometers away. The world can no longer claim ignorance over developments taking place around the world. With images and sounds, the residents of the “global village” can learn about the discovery of a mass grave left behind by a dictatorial regime. In the past, such a discovery would have only been a headline in a local newspaper. Such a story would never have been able to affect people living thousands of kilometers away. We have already said enough about how the world has witnessed technological and scientific changes in recent decades that have strengthened human capabilities. But at the same time, the world has not made any progress in terms of reining in hatred, the thirst for killing and the elimination of the other. Extremism is a pandemic more dangerous than any other, claiming more lives than any other. Extremism is not limited to race, color or beliefs. Extremism can reach its own extreme when it turns into an overwhelming need to eliminate others because they are different. The world tried to contain this pandemic. It set up trials and conflict resolution organizations and stressed the need to respect laws. But despite these efforts, extremism continued to feed on chronic conflicts or old injustices. It also thrived on crises of identity or survival. Perhaps this is an indication of some form of failure in consolidating the values of humanity. It may also be an indication of an absence of a comprehensive cultural revolution that bars the killing of innocents. The world has not made any progress in terms of reining in hatred, the thirst for killing and the elimination of the other. The world was shocked on Sunday with the terrorist attack in Sydney that targeted a Jewish festival. People across the globe witnessed the unfolding horror. What happened in Sydney cannot be separated from the anger that has mounted for years because of the Israeli military’s savagery in the wake of the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation. People were witness to the unrestrained killing and unprecedented destruction. Tens of thousands of people were killed. Relentless airstrikes

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forced masses of people to flee their homes and live in tents. The daily images and videos pouring in from Gaza were shocking and cruel and left the viewer with bitterness and a feeling of pent-up frustration. This in no way, however, justifies the targeting of civilians and their killing with such savagery. The terrorist attack in Sydney took place at a precarious time in the Middle East. The region is awaiting the meeting between Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu at the end of the month. People in the region are hoping that the master of the White House can persuade or force his visitor to facilitate the transition to the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire. The Sydney attack also took place weeks after the international community broadly recognized a Palestinian state, marking an unprecedented diplomatic success and a step forward in resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on the two-state solution. Several countries, including Australia, took a step forward and concluded that there can be no resolving this long and bitter conflict without recognizing the Palestinian people’s right to live in an independent state. The attack took place after countries and organizations came to realize that Israel is not the victim after discovering the extent of the oppression and injustice endured by the Palestinian people. There can be no choice but to corner extremist ideology and reject any justification for its behavior and savagery. The most dangerous aspect of the attack is that it has helped fuel discourse about antisemitic practices. It has helped the Netanyahu government again portray itself as a victim by saying that Israel alone is a safe haven for Jews who are being targeted across the globe. The government has a successful record of exploiting such developments, as evidenced by Israeli officials quickly tying the Sydney attack to Australia’s recognition of the state of Palestine. Extremism is always ready to pounce. A day before the Sydney attack, Syria’s Palmyra was the scene of a significant attack that targeted American and Syrian military personnel. The attack was a reminder that Daesh may have been defeated but it has not been eliminated. The attack was a reminder that building the new Syria under the leadership of Ahmad Al-Sharaa will not be at all easy and that difficult confrontations with extremists lie ahead. The Middle East has for decades paid the price of unprecedented injustice and practices that sought to eliminate the other. Countries in the region and their people have lost decades of their lives. They have lost opportunities to advance and catch up with the current era. There can be no escaping the endless cycles of injustice, killing and extremism without insistence on pursuing peace and justice. There can be no choice but to build a state of law and institutions and to have respect for international law, human rights and dignity. There can be no choice but to corner extremist ideology and reject any justification for its behavior and savagery. For far too long, extremism has fed on injustice to justify its existence and proliferation. Tackling extremism starts with tackling injustice against peoples, groups and individuals. Peace can only be built on justice and equality under law.

How Narratives Become Weapons

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The aim is not necessarily to make the audience believe a particular story, but to make them question whether any account can be trusted. This erosion of confidence weakens institutions, undermines civic debate, and leaves the public in a state where strong emotions replace rational judgment. In such an environment, actors promoting disruptive narratives find greater room to operate. It is also important to understand that not all information warfare is foreign or coordinated

I N recent years, the information warfare has become a convenient label for nearly every dispute-taking place on television screens, social media timelines, and diplomatic platforms. Information warfare does not begin with technology; it begins with intent. At its core, it is the organized effort to influence what people believe, how they interpret events, and how they make decisions. The actors involved identify a strategic objective perhaps to discredit an opponent, create doubt around an institution, soften resistance to a policy, or simply distract the public from a sensitive issue. Once the objective is defined, the next step is to design a message that serves this purpose. This message may be entirely false, partly distorted, or based on selective truth. What matters is not factual accuracy, but its ability to achieve the intended psychological effect. The second layer of information warfare involves identifying the audience. Contrary to the impression created by the sheer chaos of online communication, the targeting of audiences is far from random. Different groups are mapped according to their political leanings, social grievances, emotional triggers, and information habits. Some audiences are chosen because they are sympathetic and can amplify the message; others because they are vulnerable and can be manipulated; still others because they are influential and can legitimize the narrative. In many cases, the same message is packaged differently for each audience, giving the impression of organic conversation while serving a coordinated strategy. After the message and the target are determined, the next question is distribution. Here, the digital environment becomes central. Social media platforms enable speed, repetition, and scale. A single post, if amplified by networks of aligned accounts, can travel through thousands of feeds in minutes. Bots and anonymous accounts add layers of noise, making it difficult to identify the original source. Some-

times, false or distorted content is seeded in smaller online communities where it can grow without scrutiny before being pushed into mainstream discourse. Traditional media may then pick up fragments of these narratives sometimes unintentionally giving them a sense of legitimacy. Information warfare also relies heavily on timing. Messages are often released to coincide with moments when the public is already anxious or confused during political crises, international conflicts, economic downturns, or major social incidents. In these moments, the boundaries of certainty are thinner, and people are more receptive to simplified explanations or emotionally charged interpretations. A narrative introduced at the right moment can overshadow verified information, crowd out alternative perspectives, or redirect attention entirely. Another key element is repetition. Even the most implausible claims can begin to feel familiar through constant exposure. Repetition does not persuade through logic; it persuades through familiarity. The more frequently a narrative appears, the more “natural” it seems. This is why information warfare rarely depends on a single message. Instead, it unfolds through a steady flow of posts, comments, videos, statements, and commentary all reinforcing the same underlying theme. Information warfare also thrives on ambiguity. Rather than presenting a clear alternative version of reality, many campaigns focus on creating doubt. The aim is not necessarily to make the audience believe a particular story, but to make them question whether any account can be trusted. This erosion of confidence weakens institutions, undermines civic debate, and leaves the public in a state where strong emotions replace rational judgment. In such an environment, actors promoting disruptive narra-

tives find greater room to operate. It is also important to understand that not all information warfare is foreign or coordinated. Domestic actors politicians, pressure groups, commercial interests use similar tactics to shape public perception. During elections, governments and opposition parties alike craft selective narratives, highlight or conceal information, and rely on online networks that blur the line between persuasion and manipulation. Similarly, commercial entities may use tailored messaging to influence consumer attitudes or discredit competitors. The techniques may differ in sophistication, but the underlying logic remains similar. A particularly concerning aspect is the speed at which false or misleading content spreads compared to verified information. Verification requires time, evidence, and consistency; misinformation requires none of these. Once a claim circulates widely, corrections rarely achieve the same reach, even when they are clear and authoritative. In some cases, attempts to correct misinformation only reinforce the false narrative by keeping it in public discussion. Information warfare also benefits from a deepening distrust in traditional institutions. When citizens feel isolated from political processes, disillusioned with public service delivery, or suspicious of mainstream media, they become more receptive to simplified explanations and emotionally charged narratives. This creates fertile ground for actors who operate with minimal accountability. It requires rebuilding public trust through transparency, improving media literacy, and strengthening independent journalism. Citizens must learn to recognize patterns of manipulation, question the origins of the information they encounter, and demand evidence rather than emotion. Institutions, for their part, must communicate more clearly, respond to crises more responsibly, and avoid creating information vacuums that others can exploit.

The Fitnah of Fake News

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The Holy Qur’an also cautions believers about accepting information without verification. In Surah Al-Hujurat (49:6), Allah commands: “O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance and later become regretful for what you have done.” This divine instruction forms the very foundation upon which responsible journalism must stand today

F ROM its earliest days, journalism has striven to preserve an identity grounded in authenticity, responsibility, and truth. Across the world, including Pakistan, those committed to this noble craft laboured to ensure that the news reaching the public remained uncoloured by personal motives or sensational distortions. It was a profession that demanded integrity, patience, and respect for facts. For decades, it remained rare that journalists felt compelled to embellish or cloak their work in unrealistic hues merely to attract attention. The craft stood firmly upon the pillars of credibility and public trust. However, as technology advanced with unprecedented speed, doubts gradually arose about the very foundation upon which journalism was built. The emergence of digital manipulation and artificial intelligence brought with it a crisis that the world had never before experienced in such magnitude. The old lines that separated truth from falsehood became blurred, not due to the failure of journalism itself, but due to tools that enabled falsehood to travel faster than truth and to appear more convincing than reality. Voices could be mimicked with startling precision, images altered without detection, and entire incidents fabricated by a few strokes of digital ingenuity. The age of fake news dawned quietly at first, but soon its echoes were heard across continents. In the beginning, it led to severe blunders. False reports spread like wildfire, shaping public opinion before the facts could even surface. It was exploited to launch negative trends, destroy reputations, and weaken social harmony. Personalities found themselves accused of actions and statements with which they had no connection, yet the public—bewildered and overwhelmed—struggled to separate the genuine from the fraudulent. Deepfakes intensified this crisis further, creating confusion between states, fuelling misunderstandings, and widening diplomatic and social rifts. A recent and telling example was the attempt to link the Sydney terror attack to Pakistan. Within hours, a wave of accusations and outrage emerged, particularly from India, Afghanistan, and Israel, even though

no credible investigation had yet established the identity or origin of the attackers. The narrative spread rapidly, reinforcing long-held prejudices and political biases. It was only later revealed that the perpetrators were, in fact, from India. By then, the damage had already been done. The initial falsehood had travelled far and wide, while the correction struggled to receive comparable attention. One is compelled to ask whether the silence from these three countries that followed was born of embarrassment, or whether facts themselves had become inconvenient in an age driven by instant outrage rather than patient inquiry. Even state institutions, once considered immune to such distortions, became targets of fabricated material designed to erode public confidence. But perhaps nowhere did this scourge strike more severely than in the realm of politics. There, the misuse of technology became rampant, not for constructive criticism or healthy debate, but for defamation, humiliation, and the systematic dismantling of opposing viewpoints. The very essence of tolerance, once a hallmark of political discourse, began to disintegrate. Respect for dissent faded, replaced by hostility shaped not by facts but by manipulated narratives. It would not be an exaggeration to call this the greatest tribulation of our time—one that threatens not only journalism but societal stability itself. The Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) warned of such times near the Day of Judgment, when falsehood would spread rapidly, truth would be suppressed, and people would believe lies as readily as they once believed facts. In one Hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said that a time would come when “the liar will be believed and the truthful will be rejected; the deceiver will be trusted and the trustworthy will be considered treacherous.” This description mirrors the very challenges we witness today, where manipulated voices, forged images, and fabricated reports sow chaos and discord. The Holy Qur’an also cautions believers about accepting information without verification. In Surah Al-Hujurat (49:6), Allah commands: “O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance and later become

regretful for what you have done.” This divine instruction forms the very foundation upon which responsible journalism must stand today. Verification, cross-checking, and patience are no longer optional; they have become essential tools of survival. The question then arises; how should journalism combat this tribulation, and how can countries, institutions, and individuals be protected from its consequences? The answer lies in a return to the core values that once defined journalism. Newsrooms must cultivate rigorous verification systems and embrace transparency in their methods. Journalists must be trained to recognise digital manipulation and armed with tools to detect falsehood. Media organisations should develop ethical codes that clearly reject sensationalism and prioritise accuracy over speed. On a national scale, countries must establish regulatory frameworks that address the misuse of artificial intelligence without stifling innovation. Public awareness campaigns are vital to educate citizens about identifying fake news, verifying sources, and resisting the impulse to share unverified information. State institutions, too, must strengthen their communication channels so that official information remains clear, timely, and accessible. Individuals carry a responsibility as well. In an age where every person with a smartphone can amplify news, each citizen must become a guardian of truth rather than an unintentional spreader of falsehood. The principles found in the Qur’an and Sunnah—verification, justice, patience, and fairness—should guide the behaviour of every individual consuming or sharing information. Journalism stands today at a crossroads. The tools of deception may be powerful, but the commitment to truth, supported by timeless divine teachings and human conscience, remains stronger. If journalism, state institutions, and individuals unite to uphold authenticity, this tribulation—formidable though it is—can be confronted with clarity, discipline, and faith. Truth has always prevailed over falsehood, and in this technological age, it must do so once again through wisdom, vigilance, and unwavering adherence to principles.

Briefs

Top 10% of earners take 42%...

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the report said. Globally, the report found that extreme inequality persists. The top 10% of income earners worldwide take more than the remaining 90%, while the poorest 50% share less than 10% of global income. Wealth is even more concentrated: the top 10% own three-quarters of global wealth, while the bottom half holds just 2.0%. The report also highlighted the wealth of the very richest. The world's wealthiest 0.001% – fewer than 60,000 individuals – own more than the bottom 50% of the global population combined.

Pakistan renews pledge...

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He said that the memory of the APS martyrs strengthened their resolve. Pakistan would never allow the enemies of peace to succeed, he added. Today, the president said, they remembered the innocent children and staff of the Army Public School whose lives were taken in the brutal terrorist attack on December 16, 2014, adding their sacrifice remained a solemn reminder of the heavy price the nation had paid in the fight against terrorism.

Asad Qaiser calls for all parties...

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He alleged that democratic norms had been weakened in recent years, resulting in governance failures and economic decline. Asad Qaiser reiterated that PTI founder Imran Khan remained the "only hope" for the country in the current circumstances. He claimed that cases registered against Imran Khan and PTI leaders were false and politically motivated, aimed at sidelining the party from the political process. According to him, such actions were deepening polarization and creating further instability.

Imran sisters stage...

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Aleema Khan, Uzma Khan and Noreen Khan Niazi – along with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, have tried and failed to meet Imran over the past several weeks. Last Tuesday, after being denied a meeting with the PTI chief, his sisters and party supporters staged a sit-in, which was dispersed early morning with water cannons.

Police confirm gunman...

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they received training in that country. Telangana police said the factors that led to the radicalisation of the two gunmen "appear to have no connection with India or any local influence in Telangana". In its statement on Tuesday, Telangana police said Sajid Akram visited India on six occasions, mainly for family-related reasons, since he migrated to Australia in 1998.

Former Punjab CM Manzoor...

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which was part of the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI). He was reelected speaker of the assembly. In the 1993 elections, he secured seats in both the National Assembly and the Punjab Assembly on the IJI ticket. However, he chose to serve in the provincial legislature and was elected speaker for the third consecutive term. Later that year, Wattoo successfully led a no-confidence motion that removed the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government of Ghulam Haider Wyne. With the backing of PPP, Wattoo assumed office as Punjab's chief minister, despite having the support of only a small group of dissenting lawmakers.

EU set to scrap 2035 ban in car industry boost

"EVs will be the dominant choice, but to make the transition work for society and industry, other options must be available too," de Vries said in a social media post

BRUSSELS: The EU looks set to scrap a landmark 2035 ban on new petrol and diesel cars on Tuesday, as part of a package of reforms aimed at supporting Europe's embattled auto industry. Carmakers and their backers have lobbied hard for Brussels to relax the ban over the past year – in the face of fierce competition from China and a slower-than-expected shift to electric vehicles (EVs). The European Commission is expected to propose replacing it with a less ambitious 90-percent emission-reduction target, in a move critics say risks undermining the EU's green agenda and deterring investments in electrification. "This is a critical milestone for the future of the sector. There is a lot at stake," Si-grid de Vries, the head of European auto lobby ACEA told a press conference in Brussels on Monday, referring to the expected reforms. Set in 2023, the ban was a cornerstone of the EU's environmental Green Deal, which has come under

increased pressure from businesses and right-wing politicians as the EU seeks to bolster its industry. "There is a clear demand for more flexibility on the CO2 targets," commission spokeswoman Paula Pinho told a press conference Friday, saying Brussels was "aiming for balance". Carmakers argue the 2035 goal to have only electric vehicles sold in Europe, and an intermediate 2030 target, are no longer realistic. High upfront costs and the lack of adequate charging infrastructures in parts of the 27-nation bloc mean consumers have been slow to warm to EVs, producers say. Just over 16 percent of new vehicles sold in the first nine months of 2025 run on batteries, according to ACEA. Automakers would like to see continued sales authorised for hybrids with rechargeable batteries or those equipped with range extenders (small combustion engines which recharge the battery instead of powering the wheels). Germany supports this option

as do eastern European nations where German carmakers have set up factories. Others, like Italy, want to see the use of alternative fuels such as those derived from agricultural crops and waste products allowed. "EVs will be the dominant choice, but to make the transition work for society and industry, other options must be available too," de Vries said in a social media post. In the other camp are France, the Nordic countries and Spain who have long called for keeping to the planned trajectory in order not to harm firms that have invested in the transition to electric vehicles. Last week Manfred Weber, the conservative head of the EU parliament's largest group, said the 2035 ban would be discarded with carmakers required to meet a 90-percent reduction in CO2 emissions from their fleet instead. EU sources confirmed to AFP that was likely, adding the review would probably allow for plug-in hybrids and range-extender vehicles to be sold after 2035. This has many environmentalists worried,

with a recent report indicating that plug-ins pollute almost as much as petrol cars. But William Todts, director of the clean transport advocacy group T&E, said he hoped obtaining concessions would help the auto industry move on. "I hope that if they get a little bit of what they want, they will stop poisoning the political debate," he told AFP, arguing heated discussions had created confusion in the sector and among consumers. The commission is also expected to unveil additional measures to support the sector, including plans for "greening" company fleets and encouraging production of small and "affordable" EVs. France has advocated for a "European preference" compelling manufacturers receiving public subsidies to source components from within the bloc. Road transport accounts for about 20 percent of total planet-warming emissions in Europe, and 61 percent of those come from cars' exhaust pipes, according to the EU. – Agencies

Pak seeks oil accord with Russia

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Russian crude in April 2023 after months-long talks on the terms of the deal. A second cargo arrived at Karachi port later in June, 2023, carrying 55,000 tonnes of discounted Russian crude, with the delay attributed to limited storage space at Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL).

Bondi Beach hero becomes...

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and shot Ahmed several times in the shoulder during his tussle. Ahmed's uncle said he was scrolling through his socials when he came across the video that has since become viral, showing his nephew wrestling one of the attackers. "I suspected that this was my nephew, so I called his father and he confirmed to me that Ahmed was the one who took the weapon," he said. The footage showed Ahmed ducking between parked cars as the shooting unfolded and then wrestling a gun from one of the assailants' hands.

President calls for stronger...

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technologies, education, culture and tourism. He asked for efforts to attract Irish investment in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones and information technology sector. Referring to Ireland's upcoming Presidency of the European Union from July to December next year, the President emphasised the importance of enhancing high-level and parliamentary exchanges. He recalled the visit of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to Ireland in 1994 and a recent visit by a Senate delegation.

Afghan health...

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The visit comes after the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan barred the traders from importing pharmaceutical goods from Pakistan. Randhir Jaiswal, the spokesperson of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, confirmed the visit and extended a warm welcome to the Afghan delegation. "The visit reflects India's enduring support for Afghanistan's healthcare system, and we look forward to productive discussions," he said. Pakistan has demanded that the rulers in Kabul take action to stop cross-border terrorism and stop providing sanctuary to the TTP, but the Afghan Taliban deny Islamabad's allegations of terrorists being allowed to use Afghan soil to carry out attacks in Pakistan.

At least two killed in...

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Israr Khan, confirmed to Dawn that two people, including a passerby and a policeman guarding the polio team, were killed in the attack on Tuesday afternoon in the Thangai area of Salarzai. Khan identified the martyred cop as Constable Sajad Ahmed, who passed away after sustaining critical injuries, while another civilian was "shot dead by the armed men when he attempted to chase after the assailants."

Nobel winner Machado suffered vertebra fracture leaving Venezuela

OSLO: Venezuelan opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Corina Machado suffered a vertebra fracture during her secret journey out of hiding in Venezuela to Norway last week, her spokesperson said Monday. Machado previously said she feared for her life during the perilous voyage to receive her Nobel in Oslo. Norwegian daily Aftenposten said the injury was sustained during a high-risk sea crossing in a small fishing boat battered by high waves. "The vertebra fracture is confirmed," Machado's spokeswoman Claudia Macero said. "For the moment, no additional information will be disclosed other than what is in the (Aftenposten) article," she said. The newspaper reported that Machado had been examined by doctors at Oslo University Hospital in Ullevål.

After arriving in Oslo in the early hours of Thursday, the 58-year-old had on several occasions said she wanted to see a doctor, without providing any medical details. She had been due to attend the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in the Norwegian capital on Wednesday, but was delayed and did not make it in time. Her fracture did not stop her from climbing over a barrier to greet supporters outside her hotel shortly after her arrival, witnessed by AFP journalists. Machado has accused President Nicolas Maduro of stealing Venezuela's July 2024 election, from which she was banned – a claim backed by much of the international community. Maduro responded dubiously to reports of Machado's injury on his television program Monday. Machado "says she has a broken vertebra. What's broken is her brain and her soul because she's a demon

– she hates Venezuela, she hates you," Maduro said. She had lived in hiding in Venezuela since August 2024 after challenging his rule. Caracas has said it would consider her a fugitive if she left the country, and she has provided few details about how she managed to leave Venezuela. According to reports, she wore a wig and disguise to get from Caracas to the northern coast and drove through 10 checkpoints without being caught. Bryan Stern, who heads a nonprofit rescue organisation, claims he was part of the extraction team that helped Machado get out, in an operation dubbed "Golden Dynamite". Once she arrived at the coast, she boarded a small wooden fishing boat, chosen to avoid raising suspicions or risk being targeted by US airstrikes on suspected drug trafficking boats. – Agencies



Al-Rashdan Header Sends Jordan Into Historic Arab Cup Final

DOHA: A header by Nizar Al-Rashdan gave Jordan a 1-0 victory in a tense match against Saudi Arabia on Monday and sent them to their first Arab Cup final. Deprived of the services of Yazan Al-Naimat, who suffered a devastating knee injury in their quarter-final against Iraq, Jordan delivered a brave performance, greatly limiting the Saudi attacking threat across the 90 minutes. The semi-final at Al-Bayt Stadium in Qatar attracted the highest attendance of the tournament so far, a vibrant crowd of 62,825. Both sides began cautiously, with Jordan lining up in a robust 5-4-1 formation that sought to restrict Salem Al-Dawsari and Saleh Abou Al-Shamat in the final third. The game opened up a little after the break, as a tactical change from Jordan helped them gain greater control on the counterattack. Mohammed Abu Zrayq in particular proved influential down the right flank as he stretched the Saudi defense and gave the Nashama more attacking momentum. The decisive moment, however, came from the opposite side. Mahmoud Al-Mardi delivered a dipping cross from the left, catching the Green Falcons' defense off guard, and Al-Rashdan rose to head home the only goal of the match in the 66th minute. Saudi Arabia responded with a series of substitutions, including the introduction of Al-Qadsiah midfielder Musab AlJuwayr. The former Al-Hilal player helped link play between Al-Dawsari and Feras Al-Brikan down the left flank as the Saudis pressed for the equalizer. – Agencies

US kills 8 in eastern Pacific strikes on alleged drug boats

WASHINGTON: Strikes on three alleged drug-trafficking vessels in the eastern Pacific Ocean killed eight people on Monday, according to the US military, the latest in a controversial campaign that has killed dozens of people. Since early September, the US military under Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth has targeted alleged drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean, destroying at least 26 vessels and killing at least 95 people. The US Southern Command announced the latest three strikes on X, saying the eight men killed had been involved in drug trafficking, without providing evidence. The post included video footage of three separate boats floating in water before they are each hit by strikes. "Intelligence confirmed that the vessels were transiting along known narco-trafficking routes in the Eastern Pacific and were engaged in narco-trafficking," it said. The strikes killed three men in the first vessel, two in the second and another three in the third, the US Southern Command added. The strikes have drawn intense scrutiny from human rights advocates and Democratic lawmakers, with the United Nations' human rights chief warning last month they could violate international law. The US administration has labeled those killed as "unlawful combatants" and said it can legally engage in lethal strikes without a judicial review due to a classified Justice Department finding. US authorities have not provided specific evidence that the boats it has targeted were ferrying drugs. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said that there would be all-senators

briefing Tuesday on the "administration's rogue and reckless actions in the Caribbean", with Hegseth and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. "The American people deserve oversight. We intend to deliver it," the senior Democratic party lawmaker said in an X post published before the latest strike announcement by the US military. The strikes have been accompanied by a massive US military buildup in the Caribbean that includes the world's largest aircraft carrier and a slew of other warships. US President Donald Trump has insisted the goal is combating narco-trafficking, while Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro says he suspects it is a pretext for leadership change in Caracas. The admiral leading US forces in the Caribbean, Alvin Holsey, stepped down last week, just a year into his tenure and after reportedly expressing concerns about the boat strikes. Neither he nor Hegseth have publicly provided a reason for his early departure. "We must always be there for like-minded partners, like-minded nations who share our values – democracy, rule of law and human rights," Holsey said in a ceremony to mark him relinquishing command. During one of the first strikes in September, survivors of an initial attack on a boat were killed in a second US strike on the vessel, generating accusations of a possible war crime since media reported details of the incident in November. Hegseth has maintained he did not order a second strike, instead attributing it to the operational commander Admiral Frank Bradley. – Agencies

Argentina Hand Pakistan Another Heavy Pro League Defeat

Pakistan's struggles continued in the FIH Pro League as Argentina outclassed them 5-1 in Santiago del Estero, exposing defensive frailties and leaving Pakistan bottom of the standings

SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO: Pakistan men's hockey team continued their difficult debut campaign in the FIH Pro League as they suffered a heavy 5-1 defeat at the hands of Argentina at the Santiago del Estero Hockey Club on Tuesday. Argentina dominated proceedings from the outset, combining clinical penalty-corner execution with sharp aerial play to register a commanding victory and move to the top of the Pro League standings with 11 points. Pakistan, meanwhile, slumped to their fourth consecutive loss and remain rooted at the bottom of the table. Los Leones opened the scoring through Nicolas Della Torre, whose powerful drag flick from a penalty corner took a deflection off Pakistan defender Muhammad Abdullah and wrong-footed goalkeeper Muneeb Ur-Rehman. Argentina maintained control through midfield and repeatedly exploited space behind Pakistan's defence with long aerial balls. One such aerial found Joaquin Toscani, who controlled well before delivering a bouncing ball into the circle for Bautista Capurro to deflect home, giving the hosts a 2-0 lead at the end of the first quarter. Argentina struck again through Capurro in the second quarter after Maico Casella kept the pressure alive following a failed Pakistani clearance. Casella found space and slid a pinpoint pass across the goal,

allowing Capurro to tap in his second and make it 3-0. Pakistan showed some resistance early in the third quarter when Wa-



heed Ashraf Rana produced a fine individual effort, driving into the circle and smashing a high shot into the net to briefly cut the deficit. Any hopes of a comeback were quickly extinguished as Argentina responded almost immediately. Tadeo Marcucci released Tomas Domene with a precise pass, and although Domene's initial backhand effort was saved, Tobias Martins reacted quickest to slot home the rebound. Domene then capped an impressive outing by earning and converting a penalty corner with a low drag flick to make it 5-1. The final quarter remained scoreless, with Argentina comfortably seeing out the contest to claim a convincing three points. Domene was later named Player of the Match for the second consecutive game. The defeat leaves Pakistan in ninth place, having conceded 20 goals while scoring only eight, resulting in a worrying goal difference of minus 12. Their campaign began with a 5-2 loss to the defending champions, the Netherlands, followed by a narrow 3-2 defeat to Argentina and a 7-3 loss in a high-scoring rematch against the Dutch. Pakistan will now turn their attention to the Australia leg of the Pro League in Hobart in February, where they face a stern challenge against the hosts on February 10 and 13, followed by clashes with Germany on February 11 and 14. – Agencies

Briefs

PSX turns bearish, sheds 294 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Tuesday closed bearish, shedding 294.05 points, a negative change of 0.17 percent, to settle at 170,447.30 points compared to 170,741.35 points on the previous trading day, according to PSX data. During the session, the ready market witnessed a trading volume of 1,176.638 million shares with a traded value of Rs53,473 billion, against 905.685 million shares valuing Rs47,718 billion in the previous session. Market capitalization declined to Rs19,370 trillion from Rs19,405 trillion a day earlier. Out of 482 active companies in the ready market, 161 advanced, 290 declined, while 31 remained unchanged. Pak International Bulk Terminal topped the volume chart with 101.813 million shares, followed by Bank of Punjab with 88.665 million shares and TPL Properties with 80.372 million shares. The top gainers included Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited, which rose by Rs125.00 to close at Rs29,125.00, and Dawood Lawrencepur Limited, increasing by Rs63.52 to settle at Rs698.68. On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited-B declined by Rs896.00 to close at Rs23,200.00, while Hoechst Pakistan Limited fell by Rs292.06 to close at Rs4,516.93. In the futures market, turnover stood at 271.071 million shares with a traded value of Rs13,531 billion, compared to 202.260 million shares worth Rs13.889 billion in the previous session. Out of 316 futures-market companies, 107 recorded gains, 203 declined, while six remained unchanged. Among futures contracts, PIBTL-Dec led with 33.934 million shares, followed by BOP-Dec with 31.499 million shares and PIAHCL-Dec with 29.881 million shares.—APP

Gold price falls by Rs4,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD :The price of 24 karat gold per tola witnessed a decrease of Rs4,000 on Tuesday and was sold at Rs450,862 against its sale at Rs454,862 on the previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold declined by Rs3,429 to Rs386,541 from Rs389,970, while the price of 10 grams of 22 karat gold fell by Rs3,143 to Rs354,342 from Rs357,485. The prices of silver, however, remained unchanged as the price of 24 karat silver per tola stayed at Rs6,532 and the price of 10 grams of 24 karat silver remained stable at Rs5,600. In the international market, the price of gold declined by \$40 to \$4,285 per ounce, whereas the price of silver remained unchanged at \$62.60 per ounce.—APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.30 compared to the previous day's closing at Rs 280.31. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 281.1 and Rs 283.35, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 0.70 to close at Rs 329.48, from the previous day's close of Rs 328.78, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) The Japanese Yen went = p by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.81, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 0.81 and closed at Rs 375.40 compared to the previous day's Rs 374.59. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham remained stagnant at Rs 76.32 while the Saudi Riyal went up by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 74.71.—APP

OGRA intensifies enforcement drive to ensure compliance

Chairman OGRA reiterated OGRA's commitment to maintaining transparency, consumer protection, and uninterrupted supply of petroleum products.

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has mobilized its enforcement teams from the Head Office and Regional Offices to conduct a comprehensive inspection of petrol pumps across their respective jurisdictions. The objective of this exercise is to verify the legality of operations, adherence to codal formalities, and compliance with OGRA's rules and regulations. As part of this enforcement drive, Chairman OGRA, Mr. Masroor Khan, personally accompanied the enforcement teams during visits to various petrol pumps. During these inspections, the teams examined the validity of licenses, verification of mandatory documentation, and the availability of petroleum product stocks. Chairman OGRA emphasized the importance of strict compliance with regulatory requirements and directed the enforcement teams to ensure that all petrol pumps operate in accordance with OGRA's prescribed rules, safety standards, and legal obligations. He reiterated OGRA's commitment to maintaining transparency, consumer protection, and uninterrupted supply of petroleum products. OGRA will continue such inspections on a regular basis to deter illegal practices, ensure regulatory compliance, and safeguard public interest.—DNA



Iraq's dreams of wheat independence dashed by water crisis

NAJAF: Iraqi wheat farmer Ma'an Al-Fatlawi has long depended on the nearby Euphrates River to feed his fields near the city of Najaf. But this year, those waters, which made the Fertile Crescent a cradle of ancient civilization 10,000 years ago, are drying up, and he sees few options. "Drilling wells is not successful in our land, because the water is saline," Al-Fatlawi said, as he stood by an irrigation canal near his parched fields awaiting the release of his allotted water supply.= A push by Iraq — historically among the Middle East's biggest wheat importers — to guarantee food security by ensuring wheat production covers the country's needs has led to three successive annual surpluses of the staple grain. But those hard-won advances are now under threat as the driest year in modern history and record-low water levels in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers have reduced planting and could slash the harvest by up to 50 percent this season. "Iraq is facing one of the most severe droughts that has been observed in decades," the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Iraq representative Salah El Hajj Hassan told Reuters. The crisis is laying bare Iraq's vulnerability. A largely desert nation, Iraq ranks fifth globally for climate risk, according to the UN's Global Environment Outlook. Average temperatures in Iraq have risen nearly half a degree Celsius per decade since 2000 and could climb by up to 5.6 C by the end of the century compared to the period before industrialization, according to the International Energy Agency. Rainfall is projected to decline. But Iraq is also at the mercy of its neighbors for 70 percent of its water supply. And Turkey and Iran have been using upstream dams to take a greater share of the region's shared resource. The FAO says the diminishing amount of water that has trickled down to Iraq is the biggest factor behind the current crisis, which has forced Baghdad to introduce rationing. Iraq's water reserves have plunged from 60 billion cubic meters in 2020 to less than 4 billion today, said El Hajj Hassan, who expects wheat production this season to drop by 30 percent to 50 percent. "Rain-fed and irrigated agriculture are directly affected nationwide," he said. To wean the country off its dependence on imports, Iraq's government has in recent years paid for high-yield seeds and inputs, promoted modern irrigation and desert farming to expand cultivation, and subsidised grain purchases to offer farmers more than double global wheat prices. It is a plan that, though expensive, has boosted strategic wheat reserves to over 6 million metric tons in some seasons, overwhelming Iraq's silo capacity. The government, which purchased around 5.1 million tons of the 2025 harvest, said in September that those reserves could meet up to a year of demand. Others, however, including Harry Istepanian — a water expert and founder of Iraq Climate Change Center — now expect imports to rise again, putting the country at greater risk of higher food prices with knock-on effects for trade and government budgets. "Iraq's water and food security crisis is no longer just an environmental problem; it has immediate economic and security spillovers," Istepanian told Reuters. A preliminary FAO forecast anticipates wheat import needs for the 2025/26 marketing year to increase to about 2.4 million tons. Global wheat markets are currently oversupplied, offering cheaper options, but Iraq could once again face price volatility. Iraq's trade ministry did not respond to a request for comment on the likelihood of increased imports.—DNA

Sudan general ready to talk to Trump for peace

PORT SUDAN: Sudan's de facto leader, General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, is ready to work with US President Donald Trump to resolve the conflict splitting his country, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. The ministry released a statement after the army chief visited Riyadh as a guest of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who recently presented Trump with a proposed Sudan peace plan during a Washington visit. According to Sudan's statement, Burhan hailed Trump's "determination to engage in efforts to achieve peace and end the war in the country, with the participation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." "He affirmed Sudan's keenness to work with President Trump, his secretary of state, and his envoy for peace in Sudan to achieve this unquestionably noble goal," it said, referring to Marco Rubio and US envoy Massad Boulos. International peace efforts led by mediators from the United States, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been at a standstill since Burhan rejected Boulos's last suggested framework. The RSF says it supports the international ceasefire plan, but heavy fighting continues, notably in the southern region of Kordofan. For the moment, no new date has been announced for talks, neither under the US-led mediators nor a parallel United Nations' led effort.= Since April 2023, Sudan has been gripped by a war pitting the army, which controls the north and east of the country, against the RSF, dominant in the west and certain areas of the south. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, uprooted millions and triggered what the UN calls "the world's worst humanitarian crisis."—APP



PESHAWAR: Chairperson IPO-Pakistan, Ambassador Farukh Amil, being presented a bouquet during his visit to Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Call for taking initiatives to protect students' mental health

DHAKA: Education Adviser Prof Dr. Chowdhury Rafiqul Abrar has called upon the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the universities of the country for taking extensive initiatives to safeguard students' social and mental health. He made the call while speaking as chief guest at a view exchange meeting on "Social and Mental Health Protection Project" at a hotel here. Chaired by UGC Chairman Prof Dr S M A Fayeaz, UNESCO representative to Bangladesh Susan Vize, UGC members Prof Dr Mohammad Anwar Hossain, Prof Dr Md Saidur Rahman, Prof Dr Masuma Habib and Prof Dr Mohammad Ayub Islam and Additional Secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division of the education ministry Alif Rudaba were present at the function as special guests. UGC's Director for the International Cooperation Division Jesmin Parvin delivered the welcome address at the meeting. In his speech, the Education Adviser said the UNESCO-supported social and mental health protection project would help the younger generation to overcome trauma resulting from the July movement. He emphasized on the need to expand such programmes on a larger scale and to adopt sustainable initiatives in universities across the country. Dr Abrar also noted that close monitoring is required to help the students injured during the July mass uprising recover from trauma, expressing hope that social and mental health protection projects would help reduce the frustration among them. The adviser also expressed his gratitude to UNESCO for undertaking the Social and Mental Health Protection Project for the welfare of students.—APP

India, Jordan agree to twin UNESCO sites of Petra, Ellora

NEW DELHI: Jordan and India have signed an agreement to twin the iconic ancient city of Petra with the Ellora Caves, one of the world's largest complexes of rock-cut Hindu, Buddhist and Jain temples dating from the 6th to 11th centuries C.E. One of the most famous archaeological sites, Petra is situated between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea in southwest Jordan. When the Nabataeans, an Arab tribe, made it the capital of their kingdom around 300 B.C.E., it flourished as a center of the spice trade that involved such disparate realms as China, Egypt, Greece, and India. The Ellora Caves are 34 monasteries and temples, extending over more than 2 km, some 30 km from Aurangabad, in India's Maharashtra state. Their twinning agreement followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's talks with King Abdullah in Amman on Tuesday and was among a series of cooperation memoranda — including in renewable energy, water resources management, and culture. "These outcomes mark a meaningful expansion of the India-Jordan partnership," Modi said on social media on Tuesday. "The Twinning Agreement between Petra and Ellora opens new avenues for heritage conservation, tourism and academic exchanges."—APP

Child stabbed to death by fellow student in Russian

MOSCOW: Russian authorities said a 10-year-old child was killed Tuesday in a stabbing by a fellow student in a school in the Odintsovo District near Moscow, with the suspect now apprehended. "Police received a report that a student had stabbed a security guard, sprayed pepper spray and then stabbed a 10-year-old student, who died from his wound," local police said on Telegram, adding that "the attacker was detained" and taken into custody.—APP

Lebanon approves release of former minister accused of corruption

BEIRUT: Lebanon's judiciary approved the release on bail of former economy minister Amin Salam on Tuesday after six months of detention over corruption linked to contracts deemed suspicious, a judicial official said. Salam, who served in the cabinet of former prime minister Najib Mikati from 2021 to 2025, is the only ex-minister to be arrested since the start of Lebanon's economic crisis in 2019. The official, who requested anonymity, told AFP Lebanon's judiciary "agreed to release former economy minister Amin Salam on bail of nine billion Lebanese pounds, equivalent to \$100,000" and a travel ban. The official added that the bail was paid, with procedures ongoing to secure his release from prison.

In June, another judicial official said Salam had been arrested in connection with alleged "falsification, embezzlement and suspicious contracts." Salam's adviser Fadi Tamim was sentenced in 2023 to one year in prison for blackmail and personal enrichment at the expense of insurance companies. The former minister's brother Karim Salam was also arrested earlier this year in a "case of illicit enrichment, forgery and extortion of insurance companies," committed "under cover of the minister himself," the official said in June. Many in Lebanon attribute the economic crisis to mismanagement and corruption that has plagued state institutions for decades. President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, who both took office this year, have vowed to make the fight against endemic corruption a priority, as part of the reforms demanded by international donors. Both have vowed to uphold the independence of the judiciary and prevent interference in its work, in a country plagued by official impunity. In September, former central bank governor Riad Salameh, who faces numerous accusations including embezzlement, money laundering and tax evasion, was released after being detained for over a year by paying a record bail of more than \$14 million.—APP

Pakistan, Azerbaijan eye \$2b investment, expand eco coop

The minister also underscored the need for developing financial instruments such as joint grants, guarantees, export credit insurance, and Islamic finance to support bilateral trade and investment. He said facilitation measures, including opening bank offices and representative branches in both countries, would play a crucial role in advancing the ambitious economic agenda between Pakistan and Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said Pakistan and Azerbaijan were working to translate their strong relations into tangible trade and investment outcomes, with Azerbaijan expressing an appetite to invest close to \$2 billion in Pakistan. In an interview with Report, the minister said bilateral relations, particularly with Azerbaijan, had grown stronger since the current government assumed office, with frequent high-level engagements including visits by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan's participation during the COP29 timeframe in Baku. He said the focus was now on enhancing trade and investment flows, adding that energy, oil and gas, as well as minerals and mining, had emerged as key sectors for potential joint projects. "These are clear areas of focus as we move forward," he remarked. Oviding details on the proposed investment package, Senator Aurangzeb said discussions

were underway with Azerbaijan's state oil company SOCAR, which was exploring the possibility of investing in an oil pipeline project in Pakistan. He termed the talks as being at an early stage but expressed hope that it could be among the first projects to materialize. Commenting on Azerbaijan's readiness to provide a further \$1 billion loan to Pakistan, the finance minister said the financing could take multiple forms, including placements with the State Bank of Pakistan or support for Azerbaijani investors operating in Pakistan. He emphasized that Pakistan was not seeking aid, but rather sustainable financing linked to trade and investment activities. On cooperation in the digital economy, the minister said Pakistan was keen to learn from Azerbaijan's progress in technology-led service centers, artificial intelligence, fintech, and cyber security. He added that Pakistan's journey towards becoming a "Digital Pakistan" offered scope for collaboration in payment

systems, digital infrastructure, Web 3.0, and AI. Looking ahead, Senator Aurangzeb highlighted the importance of South-South cooperation amid stress in the global trade regime, noting that new trade corridors linking Pakistan with Central Asian republics, particularly Azerbaijan, could become strategically important over the next five years. He said current bilateral trade of less than \$50 million did not reflect the true potential of the two economies, and efforts were underway to identify priority sectors to make trade flows more meaningful. The minister also underscored the need for developing financial instruments such as joint grants, guarantees, export credit insurance, and Islamic finance to support bilateral trade and investment. He said facilitation measures, including opening bank offices and representative branches in both countries, would play a crucial role in advancing the ambitious economic agenda between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.—DNA

Briefs

IHC turns
down Justice
Jahangiri's
objections
on CJ

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has turned down Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri's objections on a division bench, led by Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar, hearing challenges to the legitimacy of his law degree and appointment as a judge, it emerged on Tuesday. The objections were raised by Justice Jahangiri, also an IHC judge, during the hearing of the petition challenging his qualification on Monday, with CJ Dogar and Justice Muhammad Azam Khan presiding over the proceedings. The bench comprising Justices Dogar and Khan previously also barred Justice Jahangiri from judicial work in September in the case, but the order was later set aside by the Supreme Court (SC). Justice Jahangiri appeared in person before the bench yesterday and presented his arguments. A court order issued after the hearing, seen by Dawn, said he had raised preliminary objections on the constitution of a division bench instead of a single bench to hear lawyer Mian Dawood's petition. Moreover, Justice Jahangiri "expressed his no confidence" in the bench on the ground of filing of an intra-court appeal against CJ Dogar in the SC, the order stated.

HRCP
concerned
over cubs
on media

DNA

KARACHI: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) on Tuesday expressed grave concern over the "rapidly shrinking space for independent and critical news reporting in the country", including the ban on government advertisements to the Dawn Media Group and its outlets. The development comes as several media bodies have condemned the government's unannounced restriction on advertisements to Dawn Media Group's TV and radio outlets – imposed after curtailing ads to its flagship newspaper – and called on the authorities to immediately rescind the ban. "The HRCP expresses grave concern over the rapidly shrinking space for independent and critical news reporting in the country, including the reported 13-month ban on government advertisements to the Dawn Media Group, which has recently been extended to Dawn News and CityFM89," the commission said in a post on social media platform X on Tuesday. "This is ironic, given that Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Dawn, championed press freedom," it said.

Israel deprioritizing
humanitarian aid,
UN warns

UNITED NATIONS: Humanitarian assistance in Gaza is being delayed because aid cargo is routinely deprioritized by Israel in favour of commercial goods, the UN's aid co-ordination office (OCHA) warned Monday, as winter storms continue to worsen already dire living conditions for displaced families. Despite sustained efforts by the UN and its partners, needs are rising faster than aid can be delivered, according to Olga Cherevko, an OCHA spokesperson in Gaza. "We continue to provide a response, but the needs outpace the speed with which we can respond," she said, pointing to the limited volume of supplies entering the Strip and a growing list of items which continue to be blocked by Israeli authorities, including heavy machinery, equipment and spare parts needed to repair damaged infrastructure. With repeated storms flooding large areas in recent weeks, humanitarian agencies have prioritised emergency winterisation. An estimated 1.3 million people are currently in need of shelter assistance. "When the storms came, many people lost everything – it washed away everything that they had," Ms. Cherevko said.

Over the past few days, aid teams have distributed around 3,800 tents, more than 4,500 tarpaulins and thousands of bedding items, assisting some 4,800 families. The response has included plastic sheeting, cooking sets and short-term food assistance to help families survive the immediate aftermath of flooding. Some of the most flood-prone locations have been identified by local authorities as unsafe, prompting several hundred families to relocate voluntarily. The UN and its partners have supported these moves by preparing and levelling sites and installing tents to ensure minimum conditions for safety and dignity. Winter conditions continue to pose serious health risks, particularly for infants. "The risks of hypothermia are heightened, and babies are in very high danger," Ms Cherevko warned. UN partners are also raising awareness among caregivers, including guidance on body-to-body contact to help keep young children warm. Beyond shelter, humanitarian operations include food assistance, nutrition screening, health service points and the gradual reopening of learning facilities. – APP

Ukrainian Ambassador
rejects Russian narrative

Ambassador Chuchuk also highlighted alleged crimes against Ukrainian children, including unlawful deportations, forced transfers and re-indoctrination

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Ukraine in Pakistan has strongly rejected a recent statement issued by the Embassy of the Russian Federation, describing it as an exercise in "hybrid information warfare" based on propaganda, disinformation and distorted facts. In a detailed rebuttal, Ambassador of Ukraine to Pakistan, H.E. Markiian Chuchuk, said Russia's attempt to label its actions as a "Ukrainian crisis" was misleading and aimed at obscuring responsibility for what he described as a clear act of aggression. He emphasized that under international law, Russia's actions since 2014 – including the annexation of Crimea and the full-scale invasion launched on February 24, 2022 – constitute an international armed conflict initiated by Moscow. The ambassador cited multiple UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's actions and reaffirming Ukraine's territorial integrity, stating that Ukraine is exercising its lawful right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. He dismissed Russian claims of external provocation as "legally null and void."

Ambassador Chuchuk also highlighted alleged crimes against Ukrainian children, including unlawful deportations, forced transfers and re-indoctrination. He referred to figures acknowledged by Russian officials and international bodies, noting that the International Criminal Court issued



arrest warrants in March 2023 against Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia's Children's Rights Commissioner over alleged war crimes related to child deportations. Addressing Russia's criticism of international legal mechanisms, the Ukrainian envoy said accountability and reparations were essential for a just and lasting peace, adding that asset freezes and damage registers were lawful responses to grave violations of international law. He rejected Russian claims questioning the legitimacy of Ukraine's leadership, stating that elections could not be held due to the war initiated by Russia and that Ukraine's constitutional framework clearly provides for continuity of governance under martial law. The ambassador also condemned what he described as nuclear threats contained in the Russian statement, calling them a serious violation of international norms, and criticized Moscow's use of anti-colonial rhetoric while pursuing what he termed a neo-colonial war of territorial expansion. Referring to Pakistan, Ambassador Chuchuk said interpreting Islamabad's neutrality as support for Russia was a "gross manipulation." He thanked the Government of Pakistan for consistently upholding the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and for its support of a just and lasting peace. Concluding his statement, the Ukrainian envoy said the Russian embassy's remarks demonstrated a lack of genuine willingness to pursue peace based on international law, while reaffirming Ukraine's commitment to negotiations grounded in the UN Charter.

Imran-Faiz May 9
nexus claims lack
explicit ISPR backing

Information minister suggests that matter should be taken up with military's media wing

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Despite repeated assertions by senior cabinet members that a nexus between former prime minister Imran Khan and former ISI chief Lt Gen (retd) Faiz Hamid was behind the May 9 violence, the military's media wing has not explicitly made such a claim in any of its public statements so far. Both Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, among others, have publicly referred to an alleged Imran-Faiz nexus while discussing the events of May 9, 2023. However, when directly asked whether this assertion was based on findings of a civil or military probe or merely on

circumstantial evidence, the Shehbaz government's chief spokesman and information minister refrained from providing a direct answer and instead referred queries to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The information minister initially suggested that the matter should be taken up with ISPR. When it was pointed out that government ministers themselves were making the claims, he again advised seeking clarification from ISPR, saying that its press release was "clear" and that ministers had only commented on it. However, a review of ISPR's recent press release announcing Gen (retd) Faiz Hamid's conviction does not state that the former general and Imran Khan were behind the May 9 violence. The ISPR statement, issued to announce the conclusion of the Field General Court Martial, said the process against Gen (retd) Faiz was initiated on August 12, 2024, under the Pakistan Army Act and spanned over 15 months. According to the press release, the former ISI chief was tried and found guilty on four charges: engaging in political activities



ANKARA: Ambassador of Pakistan to Türkiye, Dr. Yousaf Junaid, along with the Deputy Mayor of Keçiören Municipality, Mr. Atilla Zorlu, and officials from both countries, pose for a group photograph during a commemorative ceremony in Ankara on December 16, 2025, held in memory of the martyrs of the APS Peshawar terrorist attack, reaffirming solidarity against terrorism and honoring the victims. – DNA

Diesel
price
slashed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday decided to keep the petrol price unchanged at Rs263.45 per litre for the next fortnight, following recommendations from the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) and the relevant ministries. The price of high-speed diesel, meanwhile, has seen a significant decline of Rs14 per litre, effective from December 16, read a notification issued by the Petroleum Division. Diesel will now be priced at Rs265.65 per litre for the next 15 days. Ogra had earlier rejected reports claiming fuel prices could be cut by up to Rs12 per litre from December 16, terming them "purely speculative" and unrelated to any formal pricing exercise by the regulator. In a press statement issued on December 13, the authority said that it calculates petroleum prices in accordance with federal government instructions and only within the notified timeframe. Multiple media reports had suggested a reduction in domestic fuel prices, citing official sources. Petrol is mainly used in private transportation, small vehicles, rickshaws, and two-wheelers. Higher fuel prices significantly impact the budgets of the members of the middle and lower-middle classes, who primarily consume petrol for commuting. On the other hand, a significant portion of the transport sector relies on high-speed diesel. Its price is considered inflationary since it is predominantly used in heavy goods transport vehicles, trucks, buses, trains, and agricultural machinery such as tractors, tube wells, and threshers. The consumption of high-speed diesel particularly contributes to the increased prices of vegetables and other food items.

Earthquake
shakes parts
of Karachi,
Balochistan

Seismic monitoring centre says earthquake's epicentre was in Balochistan's Sonmiani

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: A moderate earthquake measuring 5.2 struck parts of Karachi and Balochistan late on Monday night, causing panic among citizens. The National Seismic Monitoring Centre of the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said the earthquake's epicentre was in Balochistan's Sonmiani, with a depth of 12 kilometres and was centred about 87 kilometres from Karachi. Sonmiani is a coastal village in southeastern Balochistan. In Balochistan, the tremors were felt in Hub, Vinder, and Gadani. Earlier today, a 3.2-magnitude earthquake rattled Balochistan's Sibi city and surrounding areas, with its epicentre 53 kilometres away from city, with no reports of any casualties or damage.

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