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Governor KP says province will witness new era of progress

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EU says lifting diesel sanctions will help Russia

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Imposition of governor rule will backfire

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Briefs

PM slams Riyadh airport attack

Reaffirming Pakistan's support for Saudi Arabia, Shehbaz said Islamabad stood in "unwavering solidarity" with the kingdom, its leadership and its people

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has strongly condemned the Houthi militia's attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, expressing condolences to the bereaved families and praying for the swift and full recovery of those injured. In a post on X, the prime minister said attacks targeting civilians and critical infrastructure were "completely unacceptable" and posed a serious threat to regional peace and stability. He described such acts of violence as a flagrant violation of international law and called for them to cease immediately. Reaffirming Pakistan's support for Saudi Arabia, Shehbaz said Islamabad stood in "unwavering solidarity" with the kingdom, its leadership and its people. He also reiterated Pakistan's commitment to Saudi Arabia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security in accordance with Mak-kah Joint Defence Allinace.

Soldier martyred, 12 terrorists killed

DNA

PESHAWAR: A soldier was martyred and 12 terrorists killed in an exchange of fire in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district, the army's media wing said on Sunday. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the movement of a group of khawarij attempting to cross the international border from Afghanistan into Pakistan was detected in Kurram district on Sunday, where security forces engaged them effectively. Fitna al Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan. Security forces, "maintaining a high state of alertness and vigilance, effectively thwarted the infiltration attempt", the statement added. It further said that Afghan Taliban posts had also opened fire to support the infiltration attempt by the khawarij. "The skilful and precise engagement by vigilant troops resulted in the killing of 12 khawarij and Afghan Taliban," the statement said. During the exchange of fire, Naib Subedar Hidayat Aman was martyred after "fighting gallantly".

Trump calls attacks on Saudi Arabia 'terrible'

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has condemned attacks on Saudi Arabia as a "terrible thing" and said Washington was considering whether to join Saudi strikes against Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi group. Asked on Saturday whether the United States would take part in the campaign against the Houthis following a deadly strike on Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport, Trump said: "We may. We're gonna look at it." "We just found out about the recent attack. So we'll make a decision. We move very quickly," he told reporters. The latest attack on Saturday killed at least 12 people and wounded 309 others, according to Saudi authorities.

CM Afridi, ministers shown the door

Emergency, governor Rule imposed in KP

The decision followed recommendations from the federal cabinet, formal advice from the prime minister and law-and-order reports submitted by relevant security institutions. The statement also cited the breakdown of negotiations between the government delegation and the provincial leadership over the deteriorating security situation



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs cabinet meeting on Sunday. – DNA

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday proclaimed an emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, citing the province's worsening security situation. "The President approved and signed the summary upon the Prime Minister's advice under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution of Pakistan," the President Secretariat's Media Wing said in a press release. The decision followed recommendations from the federal cabinet, formal advice from the prime minister and law-and-order reports submitted by relevant security institutions. The statement also cited the breakdown of negotiations between the government delegation and the provincial leadership over the deteriorating security situation.

Info minister alleges 'nexus' between KP govt, terrorists

The press conference by government ministers – Tarar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Minister of State for Interior Tallal Chaudhry – came shortly after the Centre imposed emergency in KP, citing the provincial government's lack of efforts to combat terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Sunday alleged that the PTI-led government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had a "nexus" with terrorist groups, as the Centre explained that the province's security situation necessitated the imposition of emergency there. The press conference by government ministers – Tarar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Minister of State for Interior Tallal Chaudhry – came shortly after the Centre imposed emergency in KP, citing the provincial

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Fazlur Rehman terms act 'attack on democracy'

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Separately, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has termed the imposition of an emergency and governor's rule an "attack on democracy", saying his party will reach out to the public and continue playing its role both inside and

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Our fight is against terrorism: Faisal Kundi

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday chaired the first meeting of the KP Advisory Council, which was formed by the federal government following the imposition of an emergency and governor's rule in the province. At the outset of the meeting, all members of the council introduced themselves and their portfolios. Addressing the meeting, Kundi congratulated the members of the council, while noting that they would have to face many challenges. He said that they would get a briefing on the portfolios they had been assigned

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Army troops deployed in KP

KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, in consultation with the Military Operations Directorate at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, would determine the number of troops

FAISAL SHIEKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on authorised the deployment of Pakistan Army troops and assets in aid of civil power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for security, after the federal government imposed an emergency and governor's rule in the province. The measures, imposed earlier, have been approved under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution, according to a statement by the President House. They were imposed following the president's approval of the recommendations by the federal cabinet. The authorisation of the army deployment was made through Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) (1)/2026, issued by the interior ministry on Sunday.

According to the order the federal government authorised the deployment of army troops and assets in aid of civil power for the "safety of life, security of persons and property of citizens as well as security of government installations" in the province. The authorisation lasts for the duration of the proclamation issued earlier regarding the imposition of an emergency and governor's rule. The notification cited powers conferred to the government under Article 245 of the Constitution. KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, in consultation with the Military Operations Directorate at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, would determine the number of troops and assets necessary, the notification added.

Continued on Page 06

KP chief minister in 'custody' PTI calls Centre's move to impose emergency in KP a 'grave mistake'

PTI's Junaid Akbar claims he and CM Afridi have been arrested, but govt has yet to issue an official statement

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has condemned the imposition of emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, calling the move a "grave political mistake". The federal government decided to invoke emergency measures under Articles 232 and

234 of the Constitution following a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday. Later, President Asif Ali Zardari approved the cabinet's recommendations. The Centre cited the deteriorating security situation and alleged shortcomings in the provincial government's counterterrorism efforts as grounds for the decision.

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Governor Rule in KP: solution to crisis or a political gamble?

Editorial

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

THE federal government's decision to impose emergency measures and Governor Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), replacing the elected PTI-led provincial administration, has sparked intense political and constitutional debate. The move was justified on the grounds of deteriorating law and order and the alarming rise in terrorist incidents across the province. An 11-member council, headed by KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and comprising technocrats and former military officials, has been formed to oversee provincial affairs. The critical question, however, is whether Governor Rule is truly the answer to KP's security challenges or merely another political experiment with uncertain consequences. There is no denying that KP has witnessed an increase in terrorism-related incidents in recent years. Security personnel, civilians, and government installations have repeatedly come under attack, creating an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. The federal government argues that extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary measures and that direct administrative intervention is necessary to restore order. Supporters of the decision contend that political instability and governance failures under the provincial government had made effective counterterrorism efforts difficult. However, opponents see the move differently. PTI main-

tains that the imposition of Governor Rule is politically motivated rather than security-driven. The party argues that terrorism and law and order concerns have been used as a justification to remove a government that enjoys public support. This argument becomes particularly relevant when viewed in the context of Balochistan, which continues to face serious law and order challenges of its own. PTI leaders have questioned why Governor Rule was not imposed in Balochistan if deteriorating security is the sole criterion. The apparent inconsistency has fueled accusations of selective application of constitutional measures and strengthened claims of political victimization. The federal government now carries a double burden. Having justified Governor Rule on security grounds, it must demonstrate tangible improvements in law and order. Simply replacing one administration with another will not be enough. The public will expect a reduction in terrorist incidents, stronger governance, better service delivery, and effective administration. Moreover, the government must ensure merit-based decision-making and address the day-to-day hardships faced by ordinary citizens. If these objectives are not achieved, the rationale behind Governor Rule will quickly lose credibility. History offers reasons for caution. Previous instances of emergency governance or direct administrative control in Pakistan have rarely produced long-term stability. In many cases, political tensions deepened rather than eased. Governance structures became more centralized,

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CPEC's 2nd phase offers opportunities for industrial coop

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Sunday urged the government to introduce Shenzhen-style export, expedite the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and simplify investment procedures to fully harness the potential of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Chairing a meeting of the council's Board of Directors here, he stated that CPEC had profoundly transformed economic cooperation and presented exceptional opportunities to revive Pakistan's economy and steer the country toward sustainable growth. He noted that while the successful execution of CPEC's first phase proved its viability, the ongoing second phase focuses on industrial, agricultural, technological, and scientific cooperation, which is crucial for modernizing Pakistan's economic landscape. Mian Kashif Ashfaq emphasized that setting up SEZs must be accelerated to drive rapid industrialization, attract robust investment, and generate massive employment opportunities. These steps, he added, would stimulate economic activity, reduce the burden of mounting public debt, and create hundreds of thousands of jobs to tackle youth unemployment and poverty. Highlighting the remarkable development model of Shenzhen, the PFC chief pointed out that the Chinese city pioneered innovative practices, including streamlined approval mechanisms that ensure administrative decisions within 24 hours. Its one-window operation model successfully brought diverse services under one roof, greatly improving the overall investment climate.—APP

Local AI development key to global competitiveness

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former president Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday stressed the urgent need for developing localized artificial intelligence (AI) models and applying them across all sectors to achieve sustainable economic growth and meet future challenges of global competitiveness. According to a spokesperson, he said Pakistan had a large population, a young workforce and an established information technology (IT) and IT-enabled services sector, providing a foundation for moving towards higher-value AI development, integration and specialized services.—APP

Jhang to host first-ever Desert Rally, Cultural Festival

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Jhang is set to make its mark on Pakistan's adventure sports and tourism calendar as the district administration prepares to stage the first-ever Jhang Desert Rally 2026 alongside a three-day cultural festival from October 16 to 18 in the Thal Desert at Rehmat Abad, Tehsil 18-Hazari. Announcing the event at a press conference, Deputy Commissioner Jhang Babar Sahib Din said the initiative, being organised under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, aims to promote tourism, celebrate regional heritage and introduce Jhang's distinctive attractions to a wider national and international audience. The DC Jhang added that the centerpiece will be a 95-kilometre off-road racing track expected to attract around 100 drivers and riders from across Pakistan, including female jeep racers.



Leading competitors, including renowned racer Nadir Maggi, are expected to participate, adding to the excitement surrounding the inaugural event. Sahibzada Sultan Muhammad Ali, founder and leader of the prominent off-road racing outfit Team Sultan, confirmed that he would also compete in the rally. Inviting motorsport enthusiasts to attend, he described the event as an important opportunity to showcase racing talent and establish a new sporting tradition in Jhang. He expressed confidence that leading national and international racers would help make the inaugural

edition a success, adding that the rally could become one of the most memorable sporting events in the district's history. Mukarram Waheed Sheikh, the event's main sponsor, urged sports enthusiasts and tourists to visit Jhang and experience its landscape, hospitality and cultural richness. He particularly highlighted tent pegging and horseback archery as attractions expected to draw considerable public interest. Deputy Commissioner Babar Sahib Din said the administration would establish food courts and accommodation camps to facilitate visitors throughout the three-day programme. The arrangements are intended to provide a more comfortable experience for families, tourists, competitors and other participants. MPA Col. (R) Ghazanfar Abbas Qureshi, former MPA Faisal Hayat Jabwana, Ameer Abbas Sial and other participants at the press conference also expressed their support for initiatives promoting tourism, cultural preservation and healthy recreational activities. Organisers expect between 50,000 and 100,000 visitors, although actual attendance will depend on public response and event arrangements. They added that with high-speed desert racing, traditional equestrian sports and regional festivities combined in one programme, the inaugural Jhang Desert Rally is intended to position the district as an emerging destination for adventure tourism while celebrating the heritage and hospitality of southern Punjab.

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Team HN, BN contest twin city Polo Cup final

Ambassador of Portugal Paulo Domingues attended the final as the guest of honour. His presence added a diplomatic dimension to the event, which provided an opportunity for sports enthusiasts and members of the diplomatic community to come together.



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The final of the Twin City Polo Cup was held at the Islamabad Club Polo Grounds, attracting

polo enthusiasts, club members, diplomats and other distinguished guests. Team HN and Team BN qualified for the final after a series of closely contested

matches in the tournament, which featured three teams. Paulo Domingues attended the final as the guest of honour. His presence added a diplomatic dimension to the event, which provided an opportunity for sports enthusiasts

and members of the diplomatic community to come together. The final witnessed a competitive display of polo, with both teams demonstrating skill and determination in

their bid for the title. The organisers thanked the participating teams, sponsors, officials and spectators for their support and promoting polo in the twin cities.

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their bid for the title. The organisers thanked the participating teams, sponsors, officials and spectators for their support and promoting polo in the twin cities.

Sind proposes \$9.15m floating farming project

ISLAMABAD: The Sindhi government has proposed a \$9.15 million climate-resilient floating agriculture project to develop 400 hectares of flood resilient cropland across 100 waterlogged and flood-prone villages in lower Sindh by 2029, aiming to improve food security by 30%, train 10,000 farmers and strengthen the livelihoods of communities vulnerable to floods and prolonged waterlogging.

According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the project, titled Climate Resilient Floating Agriculture Systems for Waterlogged and Flood-Prone Areas of Lower Sindh, seeks to introduce floating farming techniques using organic rafts to grow vegetables, herbs and grains in areas where conventional cultivation is constrained by excessive water. The proposed initiative is expected to benefit 12,500 people directly and 50,000 indirectly, offering an alternative farming model to communities facing recurring agricultural losses and livelihood disruptions due to floods and waterlogged land. Under the programme, 10,000 farmers would receive training in floating agriculture and climate-smart, flood-resilient farming techniques, while women are expected to make up 20% to 30% of the targeted trainees.

The project also envisages supporting womened farmer groups through training and seed capital to expand livelihood opportunities and strengthen household food security. Its key interventions include establishing floating cultivation systems, promoting climate resilient agricultural practices and providing targeted support to vulnerable farming communities. The Environment, Climate Change and Coastal Development Department (EC&CDD) of Sindh has been designated as the executing entity, while the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), National Agriculture Research Centre, Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam and Sindh Agriculture Department are listed as supporting organisations.—APP

PHC seals 1,037 illegal healthcare outlets

LAHORE: The Punjab Healthcare Commission (PHC) has conducted 3,457 raids and sealed 1,037 illegal healthcare outlets across the province during the last six weeks as part of its ongoing campaign against quackery and to ensure patient safety. According to a PHC spokesperson on Sunday, the enforcement drive targeted fake clinics, unregistered laboratories and unauthorized diagnostic centers operating in violation of

healthcare regulations. Of the sealed outlets, 860 were operational at the time of the raids, 47 were already closed, four were unregistered facilities and two had been shut down by district governments. The spokesperson said 339 centers had already closed or switched to other businesses due to the Commission's continued legal action. To prevent illegal healthcare activities from resuming, the PHC has placed 1,421 healthcare

establishments under strict surveillance. The Commission has also identified 52 cases of tampered seals, which were being dealt with under legal procedures. A districtwise breakdown showed that Lahore recorded the highest number of enforcement visits, with 543 inspections resulting in the sealing of 220 outlets. The crackdown also led to 111 closures in Gujranwala, 107 in Multan, 64 in Rawalpindi, 63 in Faisalabad, and 55 in Dera Ghazi Khan.—APP

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Oct 01/China National Day

Oct 01/Cyprus National Day

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Oct 01/Nigeria Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea National Day

Oct 03/Germany Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain National Day

Oct 23/Hungary National Day

October 24/United Nations United Nations Day

Oct/25/Romania Armed Forces Day

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PS&DC seals pharmacy over illegal drug sales

ISLAMABAD: The Pharmacy Services and Drug Control (PS&DC), Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) has sealed a pharmacy operating inside a medical centre for selling medicines without a valid Drug Sale Licence and charging excessive prices, as part of a crackdown on violations of drug laws. According to an official source, the action followed the initiation of strict monitoring to ensure compliance with an advisory issued in light of a recent judgment of the Federal Constitutional Court concerning the operation of pharmacies and medical stores by registered medical practitioners without valid licences. The inspection team found the pharmacy involved in selling therapeutic goods and medicines without the required legal authorization and overpricing, leading to the sealing of the premises in accordance with the law.

The enforcement operation was conducted by Drug Inspectors Amber Besharat, Gulzaib Khan and Tahreem Sara under the supervision of Secretary, Quality Control Board, Sardar Shabbir Ahmed. The govt has taken a serious view of sale of such kind of drugs and action has been spurred.—DNA

Isalabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy in construction work of Kashmir Chowk Underpass project worth Rs1.4 billion, which will be completed in a month, in the Federal Capital.

Twin cities witness silent shift towards electric vehicles

ISLAMABAD: Amid soaring fuel prices driven by Middle East tensions and growing environmental concerns, the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi are witnessing a silent but swift shift towards electric mobility, as more and more citizens are opting for electric vehicles as a cost-effective and eco-friendly alternative to conventional fuel-econ transport. From electric bikes and scooters to cars and rickshaws, the roads of Islamabad and Rawalpindi are witnessing a visible surge in EVs, particularly among students, office-goers and delivery riders. The trend is being driven by low running cost, low maintenance and government support for EV charging infrastructure. Several charging stations have been set up at fuel stations and in commercial areas of the twin cities. A resident of Islamabad Sohail Tanveer who recently bought an electric bike, said, "My monthly petrol expense was around Rs. 12,000. Now my electricity charging cost is less than Rs. 1,500. It is very economical." He said that it is easy to handle, no noise and no need to stand in queues at petrol pumps. He told that for students, electric scooter is the best as no

petrol tension and very low maintenance noting that he charge it at home at night and use it whole day. Ride-hailing rider, Sultan said EV has doubled his savings as he used to spend half of his earning on petrol adding that with an electric bike, he save more and earn more. "EV has changed my life as a delivery rider, fuel was my biggest expense. Now my savings have almost doubled. I just charge it for 3 hours and ride 100 kilometers," he commented. A car owner, Saba Ahmed from Rawalpindi, said she switched to an electric car for a smooth and environment-friendly drive. "There is no engine noise, no smoke and it is very comfortable for city driving," she said. She remarked that as a woman, EV car is very convenient for her as no need to go to petrol pumps or workshops adding that she said, just charge it at home overnight. It is smooth, automatic and very easy to drive in Islamabad traffic. "I was worried about battery and maintenance at first, but after one year there is zero maintenance cost. No oil change, no filter. The pick is excellent and there is no engine noise at all," she observed. She opined the

concerned authorities to further expand charging stations, reduce EV prices and provide easy installment plans to make electric vehicles more accessible for the common man. It is pertinent to mention that The government is considering several options to reduce the fuel import bill, the latest being the upgrade of refineries at an estimated cost of \$6 billion. Earlier efforts to reduce petrol imports by promoting compressed natural gas (CNG) in the automotive sector faltered due to gas shortages. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called for a 30 per cent shift to electric vehicles within five years to save \$4.5bn annually on fuel imports. The initiative, however, is moving slowly due to inadequate infrastructure and a lack of charging stations. Meanwhile, oil marketing companies (OMCs) remain focused on expanding retail fuel outlets, with limited investment in EV charging facilities. Amid rising petrol and diesel prices following the Middle East crisis that began on Feb 28, consumers are gradually shifting to electrified vehicles, including hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), range-extended electric vehicles (REEVs) and pure battery EVs. Financial statements

of OMCs reflect continued retail expansion but little progress on charging infrastructure. Wafi Energy Pakistan Ltd (WEPL), in its half-year results to June 30, reported adding 38 new Shell retail sites, 18 Select stores, two EV recharge facilities and upgrading eight existing sites. It also inaugurated a 7.4-million-litre motor gasoline storage tank at its Tarru Jabba terminal in Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to improve storage and supply resilience. The company plans to expand its Shell retail network further across northern Pakistan. Pakistan State Oil (PSO) reported in its 9MFY26 report that it had deployed nine EV charging stations along the Karachi-to-Peshawar corridor. In its 1HFY26 report, it said its retail network had grown to 3,638 outlets nationwide after adding 107 outlets in FY25. Attock Petroleum Ltd (APL), in the nine months to March 31, commissioned 33 new outlets, taking its network to 811. It is also expanding EV charging and on-grid solar installations at selected outlets and terminals, and progressing DC fast-charging infrastructure with Hubco Green and Huawei.—DNA

Doctors urge regular BP checks to prevent complications

ISLAMABAD: Health experts have urged the public to undergo regular blood pressure checks and adopt healthier lifestyles, to avoid serious medical complications. Ac-

cording to them, hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure, often develops without noticeable symptoms, making routine monitoring, early diagnosis and timely treatment essential to preventing potentially life-threatening consequences. Dr. Saleem Baig, a cardiologist, said hypertension was a major risk factor for cardiovascular diseases and could cause serious damage to the heart and blood vessels if left untreated. "High blood pressure is often called a 'silent killer'.

Zong empowering young women for Pak's AI-ready future

ISLAMABAD: Marking the International Day of the Girl Child, Zong, Pakistan's Leading Technology Services Enterprise, in partnership with Knowledge Platform, has launched the next phase of the Zong Digital Scholars Program, advancing its commitment to digital inclusion, future-ready skills, and greater participation of young girls in Pakistan's technology-driven economy. Building on an established foundation of impact, the program has reached more than 50,000 students, including over 5,000 young women, across 300+ schools in 35 cities across Pakistan. This phase marks a strategic shift from broad-based digital education outreach to equipping the next generation with the skills and capabilities needed to thrive in an increasingly AI-driven world. Over the next year, the program aims to reach 10,000 college and university students, delivering self-paced, game-based digital learning focused on artificial intelligence, analytical thinking, and problem-solving. By strengthening these critical capabilities, the program seeks to bridge the gap between access to digital learning and the skills needed to participate meaningfully in the emerging digital economy.—APP

PIMS takes initiatives to improve patient care

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has launched a series of initiatives to improve patient care, modernize medical infrastructure, strengthen clinical services and expand postgraduate training programmes. According to hospital sources, the initiatives focus on streamlining the procurement of medicines and essential medical equipment, clearing pending administrative matters and ensuring uninterrupted supplies to inpatient wards and outpatient departments (OPDs). Surgical units are also being equipped with essential instruments, specialized sutures and other consumables to maintain smooth clinical operations. Hospital sources said PIMS, with the support of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, was upgrading outdated electromedical equipment in several departments, including General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Gastroenterology, Pulmonology, Renal Transplant Services and the Dialysis Unit.

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Briefs

Police nab
370 suspects
in week

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (CT) Police have nabbed 370 suspects during a weeklong crackdown against criminal elements, recovering drugs, illegal weapons and ammunition while checking 2,823 people, 1,149 houses, 235 shops, 52 hotels, 1,557 motorcycles and 565 vehicles along with ammunition from the operations across the federal capital.

A police official told APP on Sunday that the operations were carried out during the past week as part of efforts to control crime, arrest wanted criminals and protect citizens' lives and property. The official said that among the 370 suspects, 296 were court absconders, proclaimed of fessors and individuals with previous criminal records, while another 74 were held for alleged involvement in drug dealing and possession of illegal weapons.

Police recovered 5,550 grams of ice, 6,058 grams of hashish, 1,210 grams of heroin, 114 bottles of liquor, three guns, two daggers and 37 pistols of different calibres along with ammunition from the suspects.

He said cases had been registered against the suspects, while further investigations were underway.

Giving details of the search and combing operations, the official said police teams, under the supervision of zone Superintendents of Police (SPs), conducted checks in different areas of Islamabad. During these operations, police checked 2,823 people, 1,149 houses, 235 shops, 52 hotels, 1,557 motorcycles and 565 vehicles.

The official said 130 suspicious persons, 137 motorcycles and three vehicles were taken to different police stations for further verification.

Police also recovered six pistols and 31 bullets during the search operations. DIG Islamabad Ali Wassem said Islamabad Police were working round the clock to protect citizens and control crime in the federal capital.—APP

Free hepatitis
screening
continues
at health
facilities

ISLAMABAD: Free hepatitis screening, diagnosis and treatment services continue at designated government health facilities across Islamabad for early detection of the disease.

According to official sources, the facility is being provided by District Health Officer under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Hepatitis C.

They said the initiative aims to promote early detection, ensure timely treatment and raise public awareness about hepatitis prevention.

They said free screening, diagnostic and treatment facilities are available at the Rural Health Centres (RHCs) in Tariqi, Bhara Kahu and Sitala, the Community Health Centres (CHCs) in Rawat and Shah Allah Ditta, and the Basic Health Units (BHUs) in Sohian and Golra Sharif.

In addition, free medical consultation, hepatitis screening and other available healthcare services are being provided at government health facilities across Islamabad.

Health officials have emphasized that timely screening, preventive measures and appropriate medical care are essential to controlling hepatitis and reducing the risk of serious complications.—APP

13 stolen
motorcycles
recovered

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested three members of two motorcycle-theft gangs and recovered 13 stolen motorcycles from their possession during crackdown here on Sunday. Police have recovered weapons used in the crime. According to police spokesperson, Morgah Police held the ringleader of another gang and recovered three stolen motorcycles. The spokesperson said the arrested individuals would be challenged before the court with solid evidence.—APP

ICCI, NCCIA agree to boost
coop against cyber crimes

Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between the Chamber and the NCCIA to protect the business community from growing cyber threats

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) have agreed to strengthen institutional cooperation to address cybercrime-related challenges faced by the business community, enhance digital security awareness, and facilitate timely resolution of traders' complaints. The understanding was reached during a meeting between Muhammad Shoaib Khan, Additional Director, NCCIA, and ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia, Senior Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha, and Vice President Mohammad Waqas Khan at the Chamber House. The NCCIA official took cognizance of the concerns of the business community regarding cybercrime-related issues and assured full cooperation to help address these challenges. It was also decided to establish a joint core committee comprising representatives of both organizations to ensure close coordination, effective liaison, and a coordinated response to issues concerning the business community. The two sides also agreed to organize awareness sessions to educate business people about cyber threats, digital security, and preventive measures. Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between the Chamber and the NCCIA to protect the business community from growing cyber threats. He said that as businesses increasingly rely on digital platforms for communication, transactions, and commercial activities, address-



ing cybercrime has become essential for building confidence in the digital economy. He announced that ICCI would establish a dedicated Cyber Crimes Committee, similar to its other specialized committees, to identify business-related concerns, maintain effective coordination with the NCCIA, and pursue practical solutions for affected members. ICCI Senior Vice President Mohammad Ashfaq Hussain Chatha and Vice President Mohammad Waqas Khan also shared their views on cybercrime-related challenges confronting businesses and reaffirmed the Chamber's full cooperation

with the NCCIA. They stressed that regular engagement between the two institutions, coupled with greater awareness among traders and entrepreneurs, would help prevent cyber incidents and strengthen the business community's ability to respond to emerging digital risks. ICCI Executive Member Ashraf Ali Haq appreciated the Additional Director NCCIA of specific concerns faced by the Islamabad Computer Association, Islamabad Mobile Association, and Islamabad Realtors Association. He highlighted the importance of addressing sector-specific issues through an effective coordination mechanism so that

businesses could operate with greater confidence and security in an increasingly digital environment. ICCI Executive Members Israr Mishwani, Syed Imran Bukhari, Chaudhry Mazhar, Malik Rashid Tufail, Shoaib Rashid Malik, Shahid Abbasi, Mohammad Nauman, and other ICCI members were also present at the meeting. The participants expressed confidence that the proposed joint core committee, dedicated Cyber Crimes Committee, and awareness initiatives would help strengthen cooperation between the two institutions and provide meaningful support to Islamabad's business community.— DNA

Kamal reviews
pharmaceutical
track-and-trace
system

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal has reviewed progress on implementing the Pharmaceutical Track and Trace System to strengthen drug monitoring, improve supply chain transparency and curb the circulation of counterfeit and substandard medicines. The minister chaired a review meeting to assess progress on the system's implementation and discuss measures to ensure its timely and effective rollout. The meeting examined mechanisms for improving the monitoring of pharmaceutical products throughout the supply chain, enhancing transparency and ensuring the availability of safe and quality medicines to the public.

Participants also discussed the challenges associated with the system's implementation and considered the way forward to ensure its effective operation. The initiative aims to strengthen oversight of pharmaceutical products, improve traceability and help prevent counterfeit medicines from entering the market. Kamal emphasized the government's commitment to ensuring access to quality medicines across the country.—APP

Morgah exhibition
highlights female
entrepreneurship

RAWALPINDI: Local vocational training programs and cottage industry displays took center stage at the Morgah industrial exhibition on Sunday, showcasing high-grade garments and artisanal products crafted by women trainees to boost local self-reliance and economic integration.

The exhibition 'Sanatkar' organized by the Attock Sharh Foundation at the ARL Cricket Ground, featured specialized displays from Sanatkar Rawalpindi—the Social Welfare Department's local training center aimed at linking skilled female artisans directly with commercial markets. Organizers highlighted that expanding market exposure for women-led micro-enterprises remains vital to driving household financial stability and fostering sustainable industrial growth across the division.

Inaugurating the event, Divisional Director Social Welfare and Bal-Mal Muhammad Shahid Rana and Attock Oil Refinery COO Brigadier (R) Tahir Malik reviewed the stalls and commended the craftsmanship of the trainees.—APP

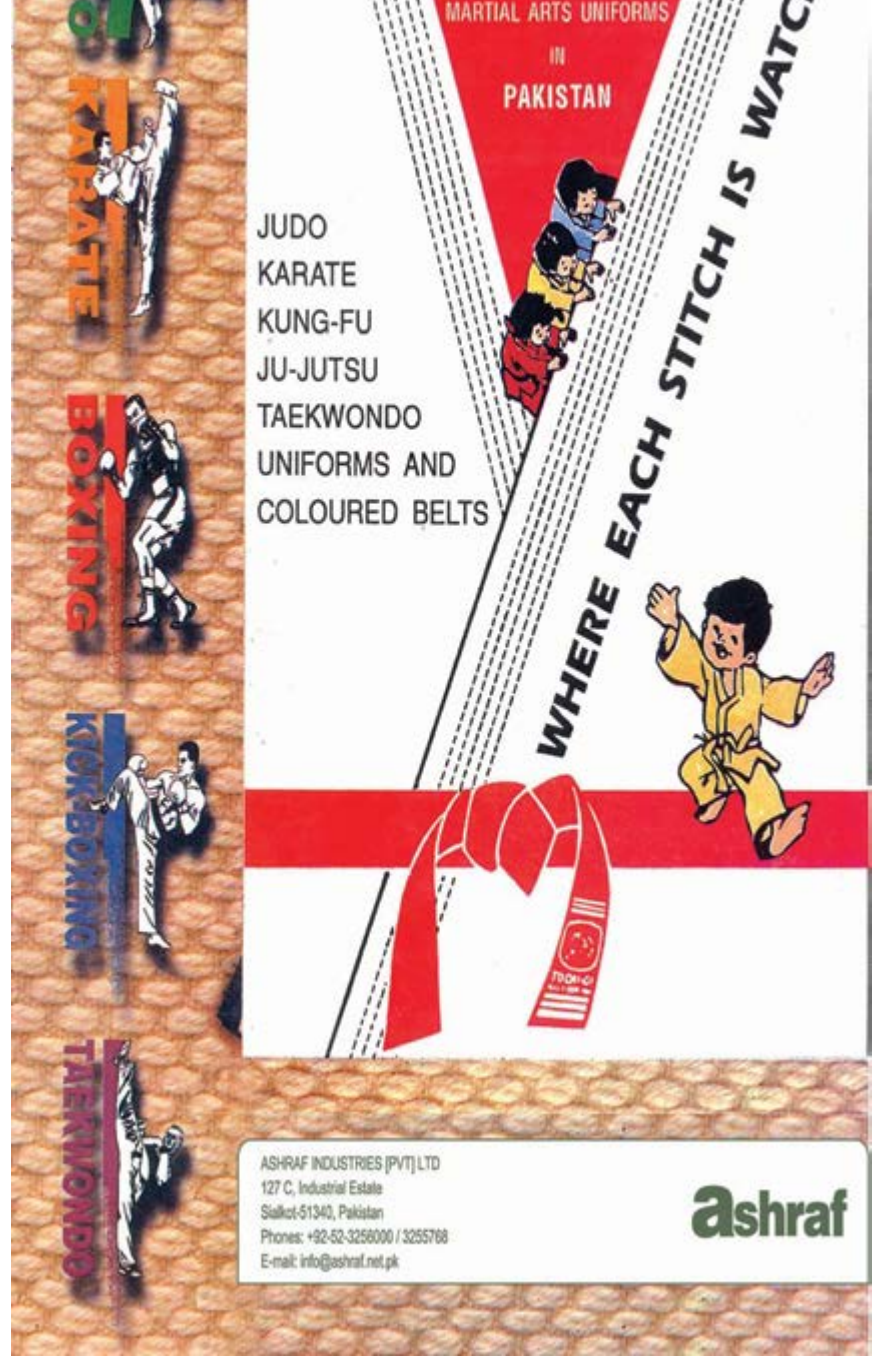
Houthi attacks on
Saudi Arabia widely
condemned

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulama Council, the International Tazeeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, and their allied religious organizations have strongly condemned the attacks attributed to Houthi militants on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and other civilian facilities and critical infrastructure in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, describing them as acts of terrorism, grave violations of international law, and a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. Chairman of the Pakistan Ulama Council and Secretary-General of the International Tazeeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashraf, stated that targeting innocent civilians, passengers, airports, hospitals, educational institutions and civilian infrastructure was wholly unacceptable and could not be justified under any circumstances.

He expressed complete solidarity with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, and the leadership and people of Saudi Arabia. He reaffirmed that Pakistan's religious scholars, leaders and people stand firmly alongside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in safeguarding its sovereignty, security, stability and territorial integrity, as well as the sanctity and protection of the Two Holy Mosques in Makkah and Madinah. He assured the Saudi leadership and people of their unwavering support and full cooperation in the face of threats to the Kingdom's security. Ashraf called upon the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the United Nations, the UN Security Council, the League of Arab States and the international community to take immediate, effective and concrete measures to halt Houthi attacks, protect innocent civilians and ensure accountability for those responsible. He also welcomed the Government of Pakistan's condemnation of the attacks and endorsed its commitment to Saudi Arabia's security and defence under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement. He emphasised that Saudi Arabia has the legitimate right to defend its territory, protect its citizens and safeguard its vital national infrastructure against threats and acts of aggression.—APP

'Mental health is an emergency in Pakistan. We need to bring everyone together, including every ministry and every individual. Everybody has to play their role in order to create a safe and healthy space to live for the people of this country,' the official said.

He added that the national policy represented a shared commitment to bringing mental healthcare closer to families through practical measures in schools, the primary healthcare facilities and communities, enabling people to access support early, with dignity and respect.—APP

US G20 diplomacy gears
up amid global concerns

ANDREW HAMMOND

THE US' hosting of this year's G20 has stepped up a gear, including with last week's trade ministers' meeting. However, this intensification of diplomacy comes at a time when there is growing concern that the global body may no longer have the capability to deal with big challenges. In 1999, the US helped create the G20 in response to a succession of crises, including the 1998 Asian economic crash. However, almost three decades later, the global group of nations is increasingly riven with geopolitical splits, with only fragile support from the Trump team. While multilateralism is much derided, entities such as the G20 have played key roles in helping defuse major crises like the 2007-09 financial crisis. In London in April 2009, in perhaps the most important G20 summit ever, a coordinated \$1.1 trillion package was agreed to help stimulate demand and employment after intensive, skillful diplomacy led by then-UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Fast forward to today and US President Donald Trump has rarely shown a keen interest in multilateralism. He has quite often left key summits early. Moreover, in 2020, his team hosted a light-touch G7 year of diplomacy, skipping the final summit during the COVID-19 pandemic and not even holding a short online session with Western leaders. Last year, moreover, the Trump administration boycotted the South African-hosted G20. This was largely over the widely discredited Trump claim that the emerging market's white minority population was being subjected to large-scale murders and land appropriations, which the president described as "genocide."

The disdain of Trump toward Pretoria continues, with the South African government not invited to this year's US-hosted events and Poland given a seat at the table instead. This diplomatic snub, despite Pretoria continuing to be a full member of the G20, has led to objections from key European nations, including France, which is the current G7 chair. While multilateralism is much derided, entities such as the G20 have played key roles in helping defuse major crises. In this context, it has long been expected that the US-hosted G20 summit in Miami in December will be held at the National Doral Golf Club, which was purchased in 2012 by the Trump Organization.

Yet, beyond accusations of presidential commercial self-interest, con-

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Pakistan's Yemen Dilemma

Qamar Bashir



Saudi financial assistance complicates Islamabad's freedom of choice. The State Bank of Pakistan confirmed that a \$3 billion Saudi deposit maturing in December 2025 was extended for another year. Such support gives Pakistan a substantial interest in maintaining Saudi confidence. Saudi's financial influence does not require an explicit threat. A government facing external financing pressures may find it difficult to reject security requests from an important creditor. The danger is that short-term economic reassurance encourages military obligations carrying much greater long-term costs

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were created in a very different international environment, but their role remains crucial. They possess financial resources, privileged access to capital markets and considerable influence over the rules governing international finance. They should use that position to reduce borrowing costs directly rather than...

PAKISTAN's military commitment to Saudi Arabia raises a question that cannot be answered simply by identifying where its soldiers are stationed. Modern warfare allows forces to attack through aircraft, missiles, drones and targeting support without sending infantry across a border. The decisive issue is whether Pakistani personnel and capabilities will participate in hostilities against Yemen's Houthis—and what consequences could follow. Scott Ritter, renowned American podcaster, military and geopolitical analyst captures the central danger: Saudi Arabia could obtain through collective defence the Pakistani involvement in Yemen that Islamabad previously resisted. An initially limited commitment could expand through casualties, retaliation and demands for reinforcement, leaving Pakistan responsible for a war whose objectives it does not control.

CNN reported on October 7 that Pakistani troops were already stationed in Saudi Arabia. In the interview, Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, director general of Inter-Services Public Relations, declined to disclose their numbers or capabilities. Asked about operations across the Yemeni border, he invoked military confidentiality, explaining that participating countries do not publicly disclose how and where they will employ their forces. His response offered no categorical exclusion of ground operations or offensive action inside Yemen, even as he described Pakistani involvement as defensive. That distinction matters. Operational secrecy may protect military personnel, but it also leaves the public without clear answers about the mission's boundaries. The description "defensive" cannot establish those boundaries by itself. Governments routinely invoke defence to justify attacks beyond their territory; the relevant questions concern what forces actually do, whom they target and under whose authority.

Pakistani forces operating from Saudi territory could potentially support or conduct attacks inside Yemen without deploying infantry there. Air operations and targeting assistance could carry substantial consequences. If Pakistani personnel participate in attacks against Houthi positions, Ansarullah could regard Pakistan as belligerent. Tehran could interpret the same activity as participation in a campaign against Iranian regional interests. The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, signed by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye on August 7, 2026, reportedly treats an attack against one member as an attack against all three. Its deterrent promise is substantial, but so is the danger of importing one member's confrontation into the security calculations of the others.

An October 5 statement published by Türkiye's For-

eign Ministry committed the partners to implement collective defence arrangements and rapidly deploy agreed military forces and capabilities to Saudi Arabia, subject to national legislation. Türkiye therefore shares the deployment commitment. However, the evidence reviewed does not establish a Turkish ground combat commitment against the Houthis or an equal distribution of operational risks.

For Islamabad, the unanswered questions are fundamental. Who authorizes Pakistani involvement in cross-border attacks? Can Pakistan resolve a particular operation? Who finances a prolonged deployment, and what conditions permit withdrawal? Confidential operational details need not be published to explain the political mandate governing the use of force. Pakistan brings potential strengths to the alliance: experienced personnel, established military institutions and longstanding cooperation with Riyadh. Saudi infrastructure and financing could support a substantial deployment. Islamabad's relationships with both Riyadh and Tehran might also create diplomatic opportunities, provided military involvement does not undermine its credibility as an intermediary.

Yet those strengths do not resolve the weaknesses of an extended campaign. Destroying particular weapons or positions is different from ending an adversary's ability and determination to fight. Dispersed forces, local networks and adaptation can frustrate superior firepower. Tactical gains could therefore coexist with an expanding mission and an elusive political settlement. Ritter's warning is strongest when understood in these terms. Predicting inevitable Pakistani defeat is less useful than asking what victory would require. Protecting defined facilities offers measurable objectives. Permanently eliminating the Houthi threat could entail commitments far beyond what Pakistan initially intended—and costs that additional military capability cannot necessarily overcome.

Saudi financial assistance complicates Islamabad's freedom of choice. The State Bank of Pakistan confirmed that a \$3 billion Saudi deposit maturing in December 2025 was extended for another year. Such support gives Pakistan a substantial interest in maintaining Saudi confidence. Saudi's financial influence does not require an explicit threat. A government facing external financing pressures may find it difficult to reject security requests from an important creditor. The danger is that short-term economic reassurance encourages military obligations carrying much greater long-term costs.

Iran introduces a further risk. Pakistani attacks against an Iranian-supported movement could damage relations with a neighbouring country and generate security pressures closer to home. The Houthis also possess their own Yemeni objectives,

cerns are growing about the Trump team's wider administration of this year's G20. Russia has aired its grievances in public, with Marat Berdiev, ambassador-at-large for G20 and Asia-Pacific economic cooperation affairs, asserting a major failure by the Trump team to fulfill its obligations as host state. Berdiev's gripes include the rejection of visas and denial of accreditations, which, it is claimed, prevented Moscow from fully taking part in financial track meetings organized by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. This is one reason why the US-hosted G20 finance minister meeting in April concluded without a joint statement or even the traditional media conference. Multiple other nations are expressing concerns off-the-record. This includes worries about what US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has called a "new G20" agenda.

This is centered on a slimmer range of topics than normal and focuses on issues that the Trump administration regularly espouses, such as energy security, artificial intelligence, and technology generally, immigration, reducing regulation, and foreign investment. Correspondingly, there is a US push to make fewer references to issues that the president finds less palatable, like climate change and the energy transition. This is reportedly already influencing drafts of December's joint declaration.

This direction of travel should come as no huge surprise. During last year's G20 process, Rubio declared on social media that not only is "South Africa doing very bad things," but also that "the world is not as good as it used to be." He also flagged his disdain for Pretoria "using (the) G20 to promote solidarity, equality, and sustainability. In other words: DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) and climate change. My job is to advance America's national interests, not waste taxpayer money or coddle anti-Americanism."

The Trump White House's unusual style of G20 diplomacy is now intensifying the splits within the bloc that have grown since the pandemic and the outbreak of the Ukraine war. This is diminishing the effectiveness of the group as a global actor. Tensions have been high for some time between China and the West and recent summits have seen significant tensions with Moscow too. G20 ministers have clashed diplomatically, with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov walking out of some meetings.

Amid the division and uncertainty, what is at stake is more than US international economic and political leadership in the Trump era. In play too is the very future of the G20 and other multilateral forums, including the G7, which the US will host again next year. At a time of growing geopolitical division, now is the time for Trump and his fellow world leaders to double down on building multilateral relationships ahead of the next global emergency. As the COVID-19 pandemic and 2007-09 financial crash showed, global cooperation and coordination are increasingly key ingredients in defusing, if not always solving outright, a widening range of global challenges.

and attacking them is not automatically equivalent to attacking Iran. Political escalation, however, can advance through perceptions and retaliation before governments agree on legal distinctions. International law offers no reliable assurance that this confrontation would remain contained. Legal obligations persist, but their enforcement is uneven, and states may invoke self-defence while pursuing military objectives beyond their borders. Pakistan therefore cannot assume that legal distinctions between defending Saudi territory and attacking Houthi positions would restrain retaliation. If Tehran perceives Pakistani operations as threatening its interests, the danger would turn on strategic calculations, perceived threats and the risk of escalation—not simply on competing interpretations of the UN Charter. Shared religion and geographical proximity would offer no dependable protection against that outcome.

Pakistan's domestic divisions make a widening conflict especially consequential. The support for a re-arrested former prime minister Imran Khan began marching from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa toward Islamabad on October 4, demanding his release, hospital treatment and family access. An overseas campaign would impose additional demands on resources and political legitimacy amid an already polarized environment.

Parliament's April 2015 resolution remains relevant. It supported neutrality in Yemen alongside solidarity against threats to Saudi territorial integrity and the holy sites, while urging diplomacy through the United Nations and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. That distinction deserves renewed parliamentary examination before military commitments overtake political debate. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye should pursue an emergency OIC initiative linked to UN diplomacy, involving Iran and meaningful Yemeni participation. Reciprocal de-escalation, civilian protection and humanitarian access should take priority. Their collective influence should also sustain action for Palestinian rights rather than dissipate through an other prolonged regional confrontation.

The Makkah Pact's credibility will depend on whether it improves security. Secrecy about military methods cannot replace clarity about political objectives. Before Pakistan's commitment deepens, its leaders must explain what they are defending, how far that obligation extends and how they intend to prevent it from becoming an open-ended war.

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

The Global South Pays More

THE difference in financing costs is particularly striking in clean energy. Recent international estimates show that the cost of capital for utility-scale solar projects in emerging economies can approach 13 per cent, compared with around 6.5pc in advanced economies. The technology is essentially the same. What changes is the financial environment in which it is deployed. The usual response has been to call for greater mobilisation of private capital. Private investment is certainly important, but it cannot be the sole answer. When countries are already facing high debt, currency depreciation, weak growth and climate-related disasters, asking private investors to fill the financing gap often means accepting the high risk premiums they demand.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were created in a very different international environment, but their role remains crucial. They possess financial resources, privileged access to capital markets and considerable influence over the rules governing international finance. They should use that position to reduce borrowing costs directly rather than relying primarily on private investors. The IMF, in particular, can do more during periods of external shock. Developing economies need financing that expands when crises occur rather than disappearing precisely when it is most needed. Short-term emergency financing should be made more accessible, while the Fund's mechanisms for helping the poorest countries cope with disasters and debt distress should be strengthened.

Special Drawing Rights provide another opportunity. The IMF's reserve asset has considerable potential to strengthen the financial position of countries facing external shocks. Yet its role remains largely linked to IMF quotas, which favour the largest economies. A fairer allocation and greater willingness to rechannel SDRs towards countries with greater financing needs would make a substantial difference. The IMF should also reconsider its surcharges. Additional charges imposed on countries that borrow heavily or for extended periods may protect the Fund's financial position, but they can also increase

pressure on governments already struggling to restore economic stability. At a time when many developing economies are trying to avoid recession and protect essential spending, such charges deserve serious scrutiny. The World Bank and other multilateral development banks face a similar choice. They can continue to concentrate on attracting private capital through guarantees and other instruments, or they can make much greater use of their own balance sheets to provide long-term financing. The latter is particularly important for climate investment. Concessional financing through institutions such as the International Development Association should be expanded. Multilateral development banks can also use their capital more efficiently without compromising their financial strength. Their callable capital and other forms of unused financial capacity should be examined more closely. Their positions should be strengthened. Guarantees have a role, but they cannot replace public finance. If a guarantee eventually has to be honoured, the financial burden may still fall on a government already carrying heavy debt. Nor does a project-level guarantee necessarily solve the deeper problems of currency instability, sovereign risk and high borrowing costs. African governments frequently borrow in dollars or euros while collecting most of their revenues in local currencies. When the local currency falls, debt-servicing costs rise even if the underlying economy has not deteriorated. This currency mismatch has become a structural weakness in African public finance.

Yet Africa's borrowing costs often appear disconnected from its actual record of sovereign defaults. Risk perceptions, credit ratings and assumptions about political and economic instability can impose what is increasingly being seen as an "Africa premium". The result is a striking contradiction: countries that need investment most urgently are often charged the highest price for obtaining it. Some countries face a liquidity problem and need temporary assistance. Others face a deeper solvency crisis in which their existing debt simply cannot be repaid from future revenues. Treating the latter as a temporary shortage of cash only

postpones the inevitable restructuring. Debt restructuring therefore needs to become a central part of the international response. Restructuring should be timely, comprehensive and capable of bringing all major creditors into a common framework. Development and climate requirements should also be considered when assessing whether a country's debt is sustainable. The World Bank itself should reconsider how it distributes risk. Its lending should be more targeted to countries in more local currencies, accept a greater share of exchange-rate risk, provide more concessional finance and participate meaningfully in debt restructuring when countries become insolvent. The central question is not whether private capital has a role. It does. The question is whether countries with the greatest development needs should continue paying the highest price for capital. If the IMF and World Bank are serious about development, climate resilience and poverty reduction, their success should not be measured only by how much private money they mobilise. It should also be measured by how much they reduce the cost of finance for the countries they were created to serve. A global financial system that protects the cost of capital for wealthy economies while making development more expensive for poorer ones cannot remain the foundation of a fair international economic order. The real reform must begin with sharing risk more fairly.

— The writer is Assistant Professor Pakistan Studies Imperial College of Business Studies Lahore muhammad.akram@imperial.edu.pk

Briefs

Syria arrests
former
Republican
Guards
general

DAMASCUS: Internal security forces have arrested Mard Mohammad, a former brigadier general linked to ousted president Bashar Assad's Republican Guards, who was known as the "Guardian of the Capital." Mohammad had emerged as a field military commander during operations launched by the ousted regime's forces in several areas of Damascus Countryside, including Qaboun, Al-Hameh, Wadi Barada, Qudsaya, Ain Terma and Jobar," a post from the Internal Security Forces' Telegram channel said. Mohammad also took part in leading military operations conducted under the name "God's Promise Is True," the statement said. Former Maj. Gen. Ahmad Mohammad Ismail, another senior Republican Guard commander under the ousted regime, was earlier arrested on September 19. Military records showed that Ismail had held several command positions, starting as a platoon commander before becoming a company commander in the Second Battalion of the 101st Airborne Regiment. In early 2016, he was promoted to head of operations for the same regiment and directly participated in leading military attacks on Aleppo, Daraa and Eastern Ghouta, according to the security forces. — APP

UK PM
supports
Ukraine
President

DNA

LONDON: British Prime Minister Andy Burnham on Saturday told Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky he had his "complete solidarity" after he clashed with US President Donald Trump over a diesel deal with Russia. In a call between the two leaders Burnham told the Ukrainian president he recognized that "the past 24 hours had been difficult for Ukraine and reiterated his complete solidarity," according to a readout released by his Downing Street office. The leaders discussed "the importance of maintaining pressure on Russia," with Burnham making it clear the UK "would continue to strengthen its sanctions on Russia and to take further action to constrain the Russian war machine, building on new UK designations against Russian targets announced this week." They agreed to meet in person in the coming days, the readout added. Trump and Zelensky traded barbs Saturday after Washington moved to ease sanctions on Russian diesel and Moscow's continued strikes on Ukraine killed at least 21 people, including four children.

Pakistan stresses diplomacy
in pursuit of Iran-US peace

Participants examined the humanitarian, economic and security consequences of the ongoing conflict, particularly its implications for energy supplies, maritime commerce, regional connectivity and economic stability

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in Islamabad convened a high-level discussion titled "The Fragile Framework: Tehran, Washington, and the Terms of Peace," bringing together senior diplomats and regional experts to examine prospects for de-escalation between Iran and the United States, the Islamabad framework and Pakistan's potential role in advancing regional peace and stability. Participants examined the humanitarian, economic and security consequences of the ongoing conflict, particularly its implications for energy supplies, maritime commerce, regional connectivity and economic stability. They emphasized that any ceasefire should be followed by sustained diplomatic engagement, credible implementation mechanisms and a political process that addresses the underlying causes of tensions. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, president of the IRS, said the confrontation reflected deeper competing interests over the regional order and should not be viewed solely as

a military conflict. He described the Islamabad framework as a potential diplomatic road map that remained relevant, while stressing that a durable settlement would require the principal parties to address the broader strategic issues underlying the dispute; particularly the nuclear issue. The discussion underscored the importance of regional security over bloc politics and confidence-building over maximalist positions. Participants said Pakistan's interests were best served by a stable regional environment conducive to peaceful coexistence, trade, energy security and connectivity. They recommended that Islamabad work with relevant regional partners to support a sustainable diplomatic process. Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, Pakistan's former ambassador to the UN & United States, and former president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, emphasized the importance of continued constructive engagement by Pakistan. Acknowledging the increasingly complex mediation landscape and the contributions of other regional actors, he called for Pakistan to institutionalize its mediation experience and strength-

en its national capacity for peacemaking. Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, executive director of the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) in Islamabad, highlighted Pakistan's distinctive diplomatic position, rooted in its longstanding relations with Iran and constructive ties with the United States and other major powers. He said the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding could provide a foundation for renewed negotiations, provided the principal parties demonstrated the necessary political will and established a sustained mechanism to address nuclear issues, maritime concerns, sanctions and economic matters. Ambassador Asif Durrani, Pakistan's former special representative for Afghanistan, proposed a phased approach to de-escalation. The initial phase, he said, should focus on ending hostilities and restoring maritime commerce. Subsequent steps could include calibrated sanctions relief, access to frozen assets and the establishment of a verifiable nuclear arrangement. A later phase, he added, should address broader regional security, maritime safety and economic normalization, with Pakistan serving as a facilitator,

confidence-builder and interlocutor. Ambassador Naela Chohan, highlighted the complexity of Iran's political and strategic calculations, including its concerns over sanctions, sovereignty and territorial integrity. She said a realistic diplomatic process would need to account for these considerations while remaining attentive to the wider regional consequences of a prolonged conflict. Ambassador Saeed Khalid drew attention to the broader international and economic consequences of prolonged instability, particularly for developing countries and vulnerable economies. He stressed the importance of Pakistan preparing for potential effects on inflation, energy security, financial stability and economic growth. The discussion reinforced the view that a lasting settlement would require more than a cessation of hostilities. Sustained negotiations, credible implementation mechanisms and a willingness to address the underlying strategic concerns of the parties would be essential to advancing regional stability and protecting the economic and security interests of countries across the region.

Nepal urges
villagers to
evacuate

KATMANDU: Nepali authorities urged villagers on Sunday to move to safer places after a massive flood in a river in the central part of the country swept away several houses and infrastructure, but there were no reports of any casualties. A dry landslide in Chumnubri village in Gorkha district, about 100 km (62 miles) west of Katmandu, blocked the Budhi Gandaki River, leading to downstream flooding, authorities said. The Budhi Gandaki is a tributary of the Trishuli River, downstream from another tributary where a glacier collapse caused a catastrophic flood in August that killed 1,457 people, with thousands still missing. "We have asked villagers living along the river banks downstream to evacuate and remain safe," said Dharmendra Kumar Mishra, the Gorkha district's most senior bureaucrat. Mishra said several houses and two suspension bridges had been swept away, and a hydroelectric project was damaged by the flood. National disaster authorities alerted people living along the river in the Gorkha, Tanahun, Chitwan, East Nawalparasi and West Nawalparasi districts about the flood. — APP

Iran
shopkeepers
struggle as
war dims
demand

TEHRAN: At a Tehran bazaar where fragrant herbs and spices whet the appetite, shopkeeper Nasir says locals once bought his nuts by the kilo but soaring prices caused by the US-Iran war have eaten into sales, leaving businesses fighting for survival. The marketplace in the Iranian capital's north would usually be abuzz with customers, but shops now sit mostly empty with only small numbers of people walking its old narrow paths, a jarring shift for the sellers shouting to promote their goods. "There used to be customers who bought two to five kilograms. Now, they're down to buying one kilogram or half a kilogram," said the 61-year-old. "Prices are truly high. We all know it, and it would be a lie to say otherwise." Nasir called on authorities to stabilize the currency so businesses could plan ahead. — APP

Trump calls for replacing
Ukraine's Zelenskiy

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Saturday called for Ukraine to replace its leader Volodymyr Zelenskiy and railed against Ukraine's attacks on Russian oil infrastructure, a day after announcing a diesel supply deal with Russia that had drawn a sharp rebuke from Zelenskiy. In some of his harshest criticism yet of the White House, Zelenskiy linked the US lifting of sanctions on Russian diesel with a Russian attack on Saturday that killed 20 people, including 3 children, in the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia. A steep rise in global diesel prices, which followed the outbreak of the Iran war in February, has become a po-

litical liability for Trump's Republican Party ahead of next month's midterm elections, when opposition Democrats could gain control of one or both houses of Congress. "I think it's time for Ukraine to get a new president," Trump told reporters at the White House, saying Zelenskiy had hurt global diesel supplies with strikes on Russian refineries. "He wants to make problems for our farmers, our ranchers, with diesel fuel because Russia supplies a large portion of the diesel fuel throughout the world." Earlier in the day, Zelenskiy said Trump's announcement on Friday of the diesel deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin had emboldened Moscow. — APP

Arab League slams Houthi
attack on Riyadh airport

DNA

SANAA: The Arab League has condemned continuing Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, including the latest targeting Riyadh's King Khalid international airport, saying the repeated targeting of civil aviation facilities represents a dangerous escalation and a flagrant violation of international law. "It also poses a direct threat to the safety of civilians, international air navigation, and the security and stability of the region," it said in a statement posted on X. The Arab League also reaffirmed its solidarity with the kingdom and the measures it takes to protect itself. "The security of the kingdom is an indivisible part of Arab national security," it

added. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has strongly condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, including a strike on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh that killed several people, including an American citizen. In a statement posted on X on Saturday, Rubio accused Yemen's Houthi group of showing a "blatant disregard for innocent civilian life" and demanded an immediate halt to the attacks. "These reprehensible attacks demonstrate a blatant disregard for innocent civilian life. They must stop now," he wrote. Rubio said Washington stood with Saudi Arabia and its people, extending condolences to the victims and their families. The statement marks a strong US condemnation of the latest attacks as hostilities involving the Houthis and Saudi Arabia escalate.

EU says lifting diesel sanctions
gives Russia 'revenues to wage war'

The move drew a furious reaction from Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and the EU pledged to keep on ratcheting up its own measures against Moscow



BRUSSELS: EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said Saturday that lifting sanctions on Russian diesel helped fuel the Kremlin's war on Ukraine, after US President Donald Trump announced a deal for Moscow to supply fuel. "Russian strikes killed over 80 Ukrainian civilians in two days. Moreover,

it has stepped up its hybrid attacks against Europe, both EU Member States and NATO allies," Kallas posted online. "Suspending sanctions on Russian diesel provides Moscow with more revenues to wage war. This is not the time to ease pressure on Russia, and Europe won't," she wrote. Trump said Friday he had secured Russia's

agreement for a major release of diesel, as he eased war sanctions on Moscow in a push to lower energy costs ahead of midterm elections. The move drew a furious reaction from Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and the EU pledged to keep on ratcheting up its own measures against Moscow. EU foreign ministers are set on Monday to formally add some 1,600 new individuals and entities to the EU's sanctions blacklist over the war in Ukraine. Separately from Kallas, the European Commission in response to Trump's diesel deal called for a truce that covered infrastructure in both Ukraine and Russia. "We continue to believe that a ceasefire which would protect global food supplies and Energy Infrastructure in Ukraine and Russia is needed," the EU's executive said. It added: "Europe knows too well the hidden costs linked to over reliance on Russian hydrocarbons, and Europe does not wish to fuel Russia's war against Ukraine." — APP

Indian capital braces for
another round of protests

Police detain over 2,000 people and lock down Delhi's city centre to thwart Saturday's protest

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: New Delhi braced for a second day of youth protests demanding the resignation of India's election chief on Sunday, as a court ordered the release of "cockroach" movement founder Abhijeet Dipke and two other senior leaders. Dipke, the founder of the Cockroach Janta Party, and the other leaders were detained when their plane landed in Delhi on Saturday as the movement planned to gather thousands of people at Jantar Mantar in Central Delhi. They were produced in front of a magistrate early on Sunday. "Condition - no breach of peace for one year," the BJP's legal head Ratna Singh said in a post on X announcing their release. Activist and social media influencer Dhruv Rathee, who was also among those detained, was released past midnight on condition he did not participate in any further protests, said an interior ministry official who declined to be named. Police detained more than 2,000 people and locked down Delhi's city centre to thwart Saturday's protest, and thousands of police and paramilitary personnel continued to be deployed

across the city on Sunday although metro stations reopened and mobile internet services were back up. Most of those detained on the first day of protests were released late on Saturday night, police said. Opposition parties and critics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government criticised what they said was the high-handed use of force against the protesters, while a UN body called on authorities to ensure that the right to peaceful assembly was respected and fulfilled. India's foreign ministry said on Sunday the UN's approach was "selective" and its statement constituted "an unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of India." The protests are calling for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over a revision of voter lists that critics say disproportionately benefits Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has been in power for more than 12 years. Sporadic protests have been going on across India since the Indian Express newspaper in late September reported Kumar's two deputies raised several concerns internally about voter list revisions, registration procedures and digital systems.

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