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Defence Minister says there was no defence pact meeting in Tehran

Detailed News On Page-08

Singapore FM Arrives in the Capital today

Detailed News On Page-08



Romanian envoy takes part in meet-the Press

Detailed News On Page-08



Turkiye Proclamation Day

Pakistan, Türkiye reaffirm 'eternal brotherhood'

Addressing the reception, Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroğlu described relations between Pakistan and Türkiye as excellent, highlighting the strong foundation of mutual trust, solidarity and cooperation that continued to underpin their partnership

ANSAR M. BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening its longstanding brotherly relations with Türkiye, describing the ties between the two countries as exceptional and rooted in shared history, mutual trust, cultural affinity and unwavering solidarity. The prime minister expressed these views while attending a reception marking the 103rd anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Türkiye, held at the lawns of the Turkish Embassy in Islamabad. He attended the event as the chief guest, while Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar was among the other distinguished dignitaries present. Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Irfan Neziroğlu also addressed the gathering. In his speech marking the occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extended heartfelt felicitations to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish government and the brotherly people of Türkiye.

"Türkiye's proud history, rich heritage and remarkable journey as a republic reflect the resilience, courage and indomitable spirit of its people," the prime minister said. He observed that Pakistan and Türkiye shared an exceptional bond of brotherhood that transcended geographical boundaries and generations. The enduring friendship, he added, continued to expand in scope and substance, underpinned by common values, mutual respect and shared aspirations. "As we join the people of Türkiye to celebrate this momentous occasion, I am confident that Pakistan and

Türkiye will continue to work together to advance peace and stability in our region and beyond," he said. The prime minister reiterated that Pakistan's relations with Türkiye enjoyed a special place in the country's foreign policy. He highlighted the deep-rooted historical, cultural and people-to-people connections that had withstood the test of time and expressed confidence in expanding cooperation across defence, trade, investment, education and regional peace initiatives. Addressing the reception, Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroğlu described relations between Pakistan and Türkiye as excellent, highlighting the strong foundation of mutual trust, solidarity and cooperation that continued to underpin their partnership. He thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for attending the celebration and expressed confidence that bilateral relations would continue to deepen in the years ahead. The relationship between the two countries has long been characterised by close political coordination and mutual support at challenging moments. Both sides have consistently expressed their desire to translate this goodwill into stronger economic engagement, increased investment, enhanced trade and closer collaboration in regional and international forums. The Republic of Türkiye was proclaimed on October 29, 1923, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, marking a defining moment in the country's modern history. The 103rd anniversary provided an opportunity to celebrate Türkiye's national journey and reaffirm its commitment to further progress and development.

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Briefs

Pak, China sign accord

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have signed an agreement to operationalise a green channel at the Sost-Khunjerab border for agricultural and allied products to facilitate bilateral trade. The agreement was signed online between the customs administrations of the two countries at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Thursday. The Pakistani delegation was led by Member Customs (Operations) Syed Shakeel Shah, while the Chinese delegation was headed by Li Qinghua, deputy head of Urumqi Customs and director of Tashkurgan Customs. According to an official announcement, the agreement aims to establish a green channel for an agreed list of agricultural products, allowing eligible consignments to undergo priority processing and examination while maintaining risk-based customs controls.

PM approves expansion of airports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday approved the expansion of Lahore and Karachi airports under their respective master plans, directing authorities to complete the projects within stipulated timelines while ensuring compliance with international standards. Chairing a meeting on airport expansion and passenger facilitation in Islamabad, the prime minister emphasised that passenger convenience must remain the top priority at all airports across the country. He directed the relevant authorities to ensure no compromise on construction quality and to carry out third-party validation of reforms aimed at improving airport infrastructure and passenger services.

Bilawal urges Achakzai to exercise authority delegated by Imran

Urging the speaker and the government to fulfil their responsibilities, the PPP chairman also called on the opposition to play its role in the House

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Thursday urged National Assembly Opposition Leader Mehmood Khan Achakzai to use the "authority and power" delegated to him by jailed PTI founder Imran Khan to direct opposition members to participate in House committees and discuss pressing national issues. He made the remarks while addressing the National Assembly during a session chaired by Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa. Addressing the House, Bilawal called for strengthening Parliament by taking decisions on matters of national interest collectively on a single platform. "If Parliament is powerful, we are all powerful; this is the power bestowed on



us by the people of Pakistan," he said. Urging the speaker and the government to fulfil their responsibilities, the PPP chairman also called on the opposition to play its role in the House. "Those who want this House to remain dysfunctional and do not want the people of Pakistan to benefit from it have succeeded," he said, pointing towards the opposition benches. "Congratulations to you," he added sarcastically. "You have played a part in helping these people achieve their objective," he said, criticising the opposition. Bilawal also criticised the opposition's decision to boycott committee proceedings, saying it had contributed to the "weakening" of Parliament. "It is your responsibility to represent your party, the people and your constituents in these committees.

ATC sentences Imaan, Hadi to 10 years prison

Imaan and Hadi were being tried in jail in a 2024 case pertaining to the alleged disruption of an international cricket team's security route and incitement to public unrest

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court on Thursday sentenced human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, to 10 years in prison each in the security breach case. Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra announced the verdict at Adiala Jail, where the trial was conducted. The court had reserved its judgment on October 27, following the conclusion of final arguments. The sentence was handed down under three separate legal provisions. Fines were also imposed on both accused. Imaan and Hadi were being tried in jail in a 2024 case pertaining to the alleged disruption of an international cricket team's security route and incitement to public unrest. The couple, accused of removing barriers from the route, was indicted on Oct 7.

A formal trial commenced after both lawyers pleaded not guilty. Both were on bail in this case prior to the verdict. The court had appointed a state counsel for the defence in the case. State counsel Atif Mehmood conducted the cross-examination of the witnesses during the trial, while the prosecution presented a total of seven witnesses. On Oct 27, both accused recorded their statements under Section 342 (power to examine the accused) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, while final arguments by the state counsel also concluded during the proceedings. Following the completion of the trial and final arguments, the court reserved its verdict and said that it would be pronounced on Oct 29. On Monday, the couple approached the SC to challenge the IHC's Oct 19 order refusing to stay the trial in the case.

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PROCLAMATION DAY OF TURKIYE

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Prime Minister of Pakistan, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Ambassador of Türkiye Dr. Irfan Neziroglu cutting cake to celebrate the 103rd Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye. – DNA

Israel piles pressure on Arab parties

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bloc on Thursday piled pressure on Israeli Arab leaders over unproven accusations of foreign funding, in a push to neuter parties that could hold the key to forming a government after an inconclusive election. Israeli President Isaac Herzog called for an investigation into allegations of fraud but cautioned against stigmatising the entire Arab Israeli community, who voted at unprecedented rates. Israel was nearing the completion of ballot-counting from Tuesday's election, in which neither Netanyahu nor the opposition bloc led by former military chief Gadi Eisenkot looked able to secure a majority in the parliament known as the Knesset.

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JUI-F sought governor's rule in KP, says Naqvi

Interior minister's remarks trigger protest by JUI-F lawmakers during Senate proceedings

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi claimed during a heated Senate session on Wednesday that JUI-F leaders had previously approached the government seeking the imposition of governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, addressing his remarks to PTI senators present in the House. "Barrister Ali Zafar sahib is sitting here. These [JUI-F leaders] are the same people who used to come to us before governor's rule and say, 'Impose governor's rule and rid us of them,'" Naqvi said, referring to the JUI-F. His remarks prompted protests from JUI-F lawmakers, including Senator Kamran Murtaza, prompting repeated interventions from the chair asking members to avoid cross-talk and let the interior minister finish his statement.

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PTI affirms Afridi to remain as CM

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The PTI on Thursday reaffirmed its support for Sohail Afridi, the ex-chief minister who was rendered nonfunctional after the imposition of governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ruling out any move within the party to consider an alternative candidate for the office. Afridi has not been seen since the Centre imposed governor's rule and emergency in KP on Oct 11. The very next day, a federal minister confirmed that he and some of his cabinet members were in preventive custody. In the notification issued by the party's central

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Hurriyat leaders decry unlawful detentions in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Hurriyat leaders have said that the Modi regime is arbitrarily detaining Kashmiris to force them into submission. According to Kashmir Media Service, the leaders said that Hurriyat leaders and activists were being booked under draconian laws for their political beliefs. They deplored that in-dias were denying space to those seeking freedom in IIOJK by repeatedly arresting them on fabricated charges. The Hurriyat leaders said that frequently invoking draconian laws against Kashmiris to prolong their detention was the worst form of political vendetta, with thousands of Kashmiris languishing in Indian jails under repressive laws. Indian prisons, but the Modi regime's vindictive policies would not stop Kashmiris from resisting the occupation. They said India must be held accountable for flagrant violations of the Geneva Convention provisions on prisoners' rights in IIOJK and urged the international community to take notice of unlawful detentions in the territory.—APP

Schoolgirl's alleged blackmail held in 15 minutes

ISLAMABAD: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) arrested a young man within 15 minutes following a school principal's complaint during an E-Kachehri about the alleged online harassment and blackmailing of a schoolgirl, while the agency also reported the arrest of 351 suspects in social media harassment cases. An NCCIA official told APP on Thursday that the school principal informed Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi during the E-Kachehri that a student was being blackmailed by a young man who had allegedly obtained her personal photographs. The principal said the suspect had been persuaded to come to the school at around 1:30pm, providing an opportunity for the agency to take immediate action. Taking note of the complaint, the DG directed the concerned officers, including SHO Zahid Shah, to immediately reach the location and take legal action. The official said the NCCIA team responded promptly and arrested the suspect within 15 minutes of the directions. The principal's timely intervention helped bring the matter to the agency's attention and enabled immediate action to protect the student. Meanwhile, Director General NCCIA Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said the agency had restored an effective system to ensure that citizens' complaints reached the concerned complaint cells without delay. He said more than 20,000 complaint verifications had been carried out during the past 42 days, followed by necessary action on the complaints. The DG said NCCIA had established 17 cyber patrolling units to monitor social media activities and take action against online criminal activities. He said the units had registered 147 cases, while 351 suspects involved in allegedly harassing citizens through social media had been arrested. Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said the cyber patrolling units were monitoring online harassment, fake news.—APP

5th Int'l Maritime Symposium culminates at Bahria varsity



ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) hosted the International Maritime Symposium 2026 (IMS-26) comprising of two sessions at Bahria University, Islamabad, under the theme "Eroding Rules-Based International Order at Sea and Maritime Security Paradigm 2.0." Diplomats, senior civil and military leadership, policymakers and national and international experts deliberated on emerging maritime challenges and the evolving global maritime order, said a press release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Navy). Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the first session, cov-

ering "Geopolitics of Global Commons International Order at Sea" as Chief Guest. Discussions addressed the rules-based maritime order, competition over ocean resources, strategic choke points, emerging technologies, maritime stability and freedom of navigation. Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Mr. Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, graced the second session, covering "Pakistan's Maritime Future: Maritime Security, Ocean Governance and Blue Economy," which examined Indian Ocean security, AI and autonomous capabilities, port resilience, sustainable governance and Pakistan's Blue Economy potential.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Noreen Baloch Lehri cutting the cake during Breast Cancer awareness seminar and medical camp at Women Welfare and Development Center G-7/1.

Kundi directs working to resolve KP energy issues

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to prepare a comprehensive working paper on the province's energy sector to effectively pursue pending issues with the federal government and ensure a sustainable solution to energy-related challenges. Chairing an important meeting on the Energy and Power Department, the Governor was briefed by Adviser on Energy Usman Saifullah Khan, Secretary Energy Muhammad Zubair Khan and other senior officials on departmental affairs, ongoing development projects, pending issues with the federal government, net hydel profit dues and other matters related to the energy sector. The meeting reviewed the progress and challenges facing the 94MW Gabral Kalam Hydropower Project, the 470MW Kurram Tangi (Kurja) Hydropow-

er Project, the 229MW Kedam Hydropower Project and the Pehur Project. Participants also discussed issues relating to the oil and gas sector, gas excise duty, the LPG Policy 2016, allocation of a 10 percent LPG quota and the supply of 100 MMCFD gas to the industrial sector. The Governor directed the department to formally write to the federal government regarding the pending net hydel profit dues and take effective measures to resolve the long-standing issue. He said close coordination would be maintained with the federal government to address energy challenges and protect the province's legitimate rights.

The meeting was also informed about issues confronting various projects, including the Orakzai, Tirah and Miran Shah gas blocks. Governor Kundi said the provincial government would engage with

relevant federal institutions to resolve gas and other energy-related matters and ensure that all legitimate concerns of the province were effectively taken up with the federation. Emphasizing the importance of utilizing the province's natural resources, the Governor said industrial development should be promoted to create new employment opportunities. He added that strengthening the industrial base would enable the province to make better use of facilities and incentives available from the federal government. He further instructed the Adviser on Energy to prepare a detailed working paper containing concrete proposals on ongoing projects, future requirements and key issues facing the Energy Department, so that the matters could be pursued with the federal government in a coordinated and effective manner.—DNA

Maulana Fazlur Rehman should play a positive role

RAWALPINDI: Chief Organizer and Media Coordinator of the Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Society, Aziz Ahmed Awan, has said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman should take his past into account and play a positive role in promoting the national interest and ensuring the stability of the country. He said that if anyone is working to promote Pakistan's development, enhance the country's positive image at the international level, and establish peace in the region, such efforts should be encouraged rather than subjected to unwarranted criticism. He said that Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and other relevant officials are working to strengthen Pakistan's role in promoting international peace. In particular, Pakistan's efforts to ease tensions between the United States and Iran and resolve disputes through dialogue and negotiations are commendable. Aziz Ahmed Awan said that Pakistan's efforts to promote peace at the international level are being appreciated. In these circumstances, political leaders should give priority to the national interest. He added that statements made merely to gain cheap publicity should be avoided, as they could undermine the country's national interests and damage Pakistan's positive image internationally. He further stated that the Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Society expresses its regret over Maulana Fazlur Rehman's approach and believes that, in the current circumstances, all political leaders should rise above their differences and support Pakistan's peace initiatives, diplomatic achievements, and national stability. He emphasized that Pakistan's role in promoting peace is of great importance for the country's prestige and a better future for the entire region.—DNA

5th Int'l Maritime Symposium culminates at Bahria varsity



ISLAMABAD: Countries must ensure their citizens have a meaningful role in developing and shaping artificial intelligence (AI), rather than remaining consumers of technologies built elsewhere, said Amir Ibrahim, CEO, Jazz World, Speaking at CNN Global Perspectives in Doha, Qatar heard that AI sovereignty must extend beyond technological ownership to enable people to contribute to the intelligence increasingly shaping their economies, institutions and everyday lives. Speaking during a session titled "The Sovereign Stack," Ibrahim challenged the conventional understanding of AI sovereignty, which often centers on data residency, computing infrastructure and domestic AI models.—APP

Rs 644b Balochistan highway projects set for completion

ISLAMABAD: Ten major highway projects in Balochistan, involving a combined approved PC-I cost of Rs644.06 billion, are scheduled for completion between 2026 and 2028. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, these projects are being implemented under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) to strengthen road connectivity, facilitate trade and improve transportation infrastructure across the province. The documents show that three highway projects are scheduled for completion by December 2026, six others have completion deadlines in 2027, while one major project is expected to be completed in June 2028. Among the projects nearing completion, the 22.7-kilometre dualisation of Quetta Western Bypass (N-25), costing Rs6.89 billion, has achieved 85% physical progress, with expenditure reaching Rs6.05 billion. The project is scheduled for completion in November 2026. Similarly, the 103-kilometre Nokundi-Mashkel road project, with an approved cost of Rs7.71 billion, has achieved 79% progress. Expenditure on the project has reached Rs6.94 billion, with completion expected in December 2026. The 79.89-kilometre Jhal Jhao-Bela Road project, costing Rs16.22 billion, has recorded 70% physical progress and expenditure of Rs13.87 billion. Its completion is also scheduled for December 2026. The documents indicate that substantial investment is concentrated in the N-25 highway, a major transportation corridor connecting Karachi, Quetta and Chaman.—APP

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Citizen-in-Loop approach essential for sovereign AI

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Haroon for peace, harmony, respect for human rights

RAWALPINDI: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) and Minister of State Fahd Haroon has called for promoting peace, interfaith harmony, kindness and respect for human rights, emphasising that these values should be reflected in everyday behaviour and interactions. Addressing the award ceremony as the chief guest, organised by the National Peace Committee for Interfaith Harmony and Human Rights at Punjab Arts Council, Rawalpindi, Fahd Haroon said that peace and harmony could be strengthened through mutual understanding, compassion, justice and respect for people from different religious and social backgrounds. He thanked the organiser, Raja Samad, and his team at the National Peace Committee for Interfaith Harmony and Human Rights for inviting him to the occasion, saying such gatherings provided an opportunity to recognise individuals working for the betterment of society. Congratulating the award recipients from various fields, including law enforcement, journalism, education, human rights and social welfare, Haroon appreciated their contributions and said recognition encouraged people to continue serving society with dedication and sincerity. He said people often remained occupied with their daily responsibilities and overlooked the efforts of those quietly working for the welfare of others, adding that such ceremonies helped acknowledge their contributions and boost their confidence.

Fahd Haroon said the teachings of Islam emphasised kindness, justice, compassion and respect for others, adding that the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reminded people of their responsibility towards fellow human beings. He stressed that these values should not remain confined to speeches and ceremonies but should be practised in daily life, particularly in the way people interacted with others, responded to differences and treated the less fortunate. He said Pakistan was a shared home for people belonging to different religious and social backgrounds, all of whom had contributed to the country's development and had a role to play in its future. Emphasising the importance of interfaith harmony, he said people might have different beliefs, professions and perspectives, but they shared a common responsibility towards the country and its people.—APP

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Oct 05/Indonesia Armed Forces Day

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan planting a saplings during his visit to the National Press Club. President NPC Razzaq Sial and Secretary Dr. Furqan Rao also present on the occasion. News on the Back Page. DNA

Pak, Nigeria for stronger strategic partnership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Charge d' Affaires of Nigeria to Pakistan, Mohammed Yasau, called for Nigeria and Pakistan to move beyond their longstanding historical ties towards a more dynamic and forward-looking strategic partnership. He emphasised the need to translate mutual trust and shared aspirations into tangible cooperation in defence and security, trade, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, energy and information technology, while strengthening coordination at multilateral forums. He underscored that Nigeria and Pakistan have a shared responsibility to advance global peace, equitable

development and a more representative international order while addressing at Nigeria's National Day celebration held at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). In his introductory remarks, Ambassador Moin ul Haque, Director General ISSI, highlighted Nigeria's economic potential, cultural heritage and regional leadership. He underscored the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Nigeria since 1961. He called for increased bilateral trade and faster progress on the bilateral trade treaty. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed recalled the historical ties between Pakistan and Nigeria, including the legacy of Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. He also

emphasised Africa's growing global significance and the opportunities for Pakistan through trade, investment, education and research. He reaffirmed the importance of turning longstanding goodwill into practical cooperation between Pakistan and African countries. Muhammad Imran, Head of Chancery, Pakistan's Mission in Nigeria, stated that there is immense potential for enhanced cooperation in trade and investment, education and other key sectors. He emphasised the importance of strengthening business ties between the two countries. Dr. Amna Khan, Director, CAMEA in her welcome remarks underscored CAMEA's commitment to deepening Pakistan's intellectual engagement with Africa

and promoting greater understanding of the Continent. She also emphasised the importance of strengthening ties with African partners through dialogue and shared learning. In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, Board of Governors ISSI, describe Nigeria as the 'Giant of Africa', highlighting its energy, talent and ambition. He also commended the role of the Pakistan Research Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR), bringing together diplomats, policymakers and researchers.

AIQOU to host webinar

ISLAMABAD: The Literary Society, Department of English, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIQOU), is organizing an online webinar on emerging concepts in multilingual communication. The webinar titled "Beyond the Code: Switching / Translanguaging Divide: A Multi-Level Framework for Multilingual Communication" will be held on *30 October 2026 from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm* online. According to details shared by AIQOU, the session will be held in collaboration with PakTESOL and will feature Dr. Arshad Ali Khan, Professor at University of Management and Technology (UMT), Lahore, as the keynote speaker. The discussion will explore the evolving debate between code-switching and translanguaging, and propose a multi-level framework for understanding multilingual communication in academic and everyday contexts.—DNA

CDA intensifies board actions against illegal encroachments

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), under the vision of Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Federal Minister for Interior, and the leadership of Sohail Ashraf, Chairman CDA, has intended its comprehensive campaign against illegal encroachments to reclaim state land, dismantle long-standing illegal structures, and address alleged irregularities, and protect valuable public assets across Islamabad. Through its ongoing recovery operations, CDA has reclaimed public land and recovered state land of worth approximately Rs 1,300 billion (Rs 1.3 trillion). These efforts reflect the Authority's commitment to safeguarding national wealth, upholding the rule of law, restoring planned urban development, and ensuring that public property is protected for the benefit of citizens. As part of these efforts, approximately 600 acres of state land near the Prime Minister's House have been recovered. This recovery marks a significant step towards protecting strategically located public land and reinforcing the principle that state property must be safeguarded in accordance with the law. The operation also highlights the importance of systematic enforcement and verification of land records in addressing long-standing encroachments and ensuring that public assets remain available for their designated purposes. In Sector E-12, the retrieval of 1,135 Kanals of land from encroachers have paved the way for development activities to resume after decades of delay. The removal of illegal structures and reclamation of the land are expected to facilitate the sector's planned development and help resolve long-standing obstacles that have hindered the implementation of development plans. The resumption of development activities is particularly significant for residents and prospective allottees who have been awaiting progress in the sector. This initiative reflects CDA's broader objective of resolving persistent land-related impediments and advancing planned urban development in accordance with applicable rules and procedures. In Sector C-17, illegal commercial structures spread across 116.8 Kanals have been demolished as part of CDA's efforts to reclaim public land and prevent its unauthorised commercial exploitation. The operation forms part of a broader enforcement strategy aimed at removing illegal structures, restoring the intended use of state land, and discouraging further encroachments. Meanwhile, in Malpur, five plazas along Murree Road have been vacated, while the process of recovering 108 Kanals of land remains underway. These operations demonstrate the geographical scope of CDA's campaign and its focus on addressing encroachments that obstruct planned development and compromise the orderly use of public property. The progress achieved through these operations has required sustained groundwork, including comprehensive surveys, verification of revenue records, examination of ownership documents, legal scrutiny, and continued field enforcement. Land recovery is a complex process that requires each case to be assessed in light of relevant records and applicable legal requirements

to ensure that enforcement measures are carried out in accordance with the law. Citizens have welcomed the recovery of state land and the resumption of long-awaited development activities, appreciating efforts to remove illegal encroachments, protect public assets, and restore land for its intended use. Progress in Sector E-12 and enforcement operations in other parts of Islamabad have highlighted the importance of planned development, effective land management, and the protection of the capital's public spaces. For residents, the significance of these measures extends beyond land recovery; transparent administration, improved urban planning, and the removal of obstacles to development are essential to strengthening public confidence and supporting Islamabad's long-term growth.—DNA



HSA organizes future health moot

ISLAMABAD: Health Services Academy (HSA) on Thursday organized the future health conference 2026 to bring together health professionals, researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders to discuss emerging trends, challenges and opportunities in the healthcare sector. Vice Chancellor HSA Prof. Dr. Shahzad Ali Akbar said the conference provided an important platform for exchanging knowledge, sharing innovative ideas and exploring strategies to strengthen Pakistan's healthcare system. He emphasized the need to promote research, innovation and evidence-based policymaking to address evolving public health challenges. He said strengthening healthcare institutions, improving professional capacity and adopting modern approaches were essential to ensuring accessible, equitable and quality healthcare services for the population. Other speakers highlighted the importance of collaboration among academic institutions, healthcare professionals, policymakers and development partners to address emerging health challenges. They stressed that coordinated efforts and knowledge sharing could help improve healthcare delivery and support sustainable health system development.—APP

Senate adopts resolution on population growth

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Thursday unanimously adopted a resolution, calling for a coordinated national effort to curb Pakistan's rapid population growth and prevent the country's demographic dividend from turning into a "demographic time bomb". Central Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party Senator Sherry Rehman moved the resolution in the House. Moving the resolution, Sherry Rehman said Pakistan's population had reached 241.49 million, placing unprecedented pressure on national resources. She described rapid population growth as one of the country's most overlooked challenges, affecting households already struggling with water insecurity and increasing climate vulnerability. She said the pressures were also affecting nutrition, education and human development. Many people were unable to provide adequate nutrition at the right time, while limited resources had to meet the needs of a growing population, she added. Sherry Rehman said the country's education system was under particular strain, with 26 million children out of school. Rapid growth also affected the quality and quantity of human capital and placed additional pressure on schools, hospitals, farms and household resources, she said. The resolution called on the government to take all necessary measures in coordination with provincial governments, parliamentarians, public and private sector officials, media practitioners, religious scholars and community leaders. It urged a "whole-of-country" approach, directed the population growth through transparent information campaigns, expanded family planning services, scaling up the Lady Health Workers programme, budgetary incentives.—APP

Briefs
IRSA releases
86,100
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 86,100 cusecs of water from various rimstations with an inflow of 53,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1512.09 feet, which was 110.09 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 28,000 cusecs and 52,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1196.05 feet, which was 146.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 7,000 cusecs and 16,000 cusecs, respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 64,100, 46,100, 32,700, and 11,100 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul a total of 10,000 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 2,300 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala—APP. The DHO and WHO collaboration also reflects a shared commitment to strengthening public health awareness and supporting Sustainable Development Goal 3, which focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all—APP.

Almonds, cashews not covered by smuggled goods notification, rules SC

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has ruled that shelled almonds and cashewes do not fall within the specific categories of smuggled goods listed under the Customs Act, observing that a ban on import restrictions alone does not automatically render goods legally smuggled. The court dismissed appeals filed by customs authorities against a decision by the High Court judges, holding that the phrase "all kinds of food grains and food items" used in the relevant notification could not be interpreted so broadly as to include distinct categories of goods such as almonds and cashews.

According to the detailed judgment authored by Justice Muhammad Shah Siddiqui, a three-member bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Muhammad Shah Siddiqui, and Justice Hassan Aurangzeb, the customs authorities' appeals on October 8, 2026. According to the case record, customs officials intercepted vehicles transporting foreign-origin almonds and cashews in Nokkundi on October 20, 2024, following a tip-off. The goods declarations presented by the drivers did not match the customs records, as the relevant declarations pertained to Iranian raisins and contained different vehicle details.

The customs authorities ordered the seizure of the goods and the vehicles used for their transportation. However, the Customs Appellate Tribunal allowed the release of the goods subject to payment of applicable duties and taxes and a penalty equivalent to 20 per cent of their customs value. It also set aside the seizure of the vehicles. The Balochistan High Court subsequently dismissed the customs authorities' challenges to the tribunal's decisions. The Supreme Court observed that the notification referred to various types of food grains, including wheat, rice, maize, barley and pulses. Almonds and cashews, however, were ordinarily classified as nuts and could not be placed in the same category of food grains. The court held that if the authorities intended to include almonds and cashews within the notification governing smuggled goods, they should have expressly mentioned them. The mere fact that these products were edible did not justify bringing them within the notification's broad wording. The judgment further clarified that restrictions and conditions imposed on the import of these products under the Import Policy Order 2022 did not automatically make them smuggled goods under the Customs Act—APP.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, group photograph with former Punjab Minister for Health and Population Welfare Dr. Jamal Nasir, Focal Person of the Prime Minister's Hepatitis C Elimination Programme Zubair Nasir, Vice Chancellor of National Skills University Islamabad Professor Dr. Saud Altaf, and other officials during the Hepatitis C screening camp at the university.

NCCIA educates kids on online safety

ISLAMABAD: National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Public Relations Officer (PRO) Mahboob Elahi organised a cybercrime awareness session at NES to educate students and teachers about safe social media use, online harassment, black-mailing and ways to protect children from cyber threats. According to an NCCIA official told on Thursday, the session was organised under the supervision of NCCIA Headquarters Islamabad to promote awareness about digital safety among school children. He said students and teachers were briefed on the positive and responsible use of social media, precautions during online activities and measures to avoid cyber crime. Children were particularly advised to remain alert when interacting with strangers online, to be wary of expensive ride-hailing services, to be wary of known persons on social media, especially those who approached them as friends and later attempted to entice them in inappropriate conversations, harassment or blackmailing. He said students were encouraged not to remain silent or frightened if they faced such situations, but to immediately inform their parents, teachers or another trusted adult—APP.

Clean Air Compact calls for federal-provincial coordination

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Clean Air Conference concluded on Thursday with the adoption of the Islamabad Clean Air Compact, committing federal and provincial stakeholders to a collaborative framework centred on time-bound implementation, stricter enforcement, regular emissions inventories and annual review meetings. The two-day conference brought government officials, provincial environmental protection, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and international development partners together to develop practical responses to air pollution, with discussions focusing on monitoring, transport emissions, agricultural burning, industrial pollution, clean cooking and climate finance. The compact, which was signed by representatives of the federal government, provincial governments, and international development partners, sets out a framework for coordinated implementation, supported by reliable data, clear institutional responsibilities and sustainable financing. Syed Abrar Hussain, Director General of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency, highlighted the importance of multi-sectoral and regional strategies, advanced planning before the smog season and stronger monitoring mechanisms. The compact envisages regular reviews and a more coordinated federal-provincial approach to air quality management, although the detailed implementation timeline and responsibilities of individual institutions will be critical to assessing progress. During the technical sessions, Wajid Ijaz of the Environment Protection and Climate Change Department stressed that reliable data was central to effective air quality governance, including decisions about regulatory interventions, legal instruments and public spending. He said the governance cycle should begin with investment in air quality monitoring and analytics, supported by source-apportionment studies, emissions inventories, real-time source tracking and modelling tools. Such information could enable authorities to target actual pollution sources rather than impose broad restrictions without sufficient evidence, he said. Data could also guide interventions in clean cooking, transport and crop residue management, while helping inform the public about pollution exposure and preventive health measures. The governance roadmap presented at the conference proposed establishing legal and regulatory frameworks, improving institutional responsibilities between the federal and provincial governments and the establishment of a National Clean Air Financing Framework. The proposed framework would bring together public budgets, fiscal transfers, climate and green finance, development partner resources and private investment to support large-scale air quality improvements—DNA.

Asifa lauds BISP's role in women's empowerment

She also reviewed skills training delivered through the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Human Resource Research and Development Board in collaboration with the Government of Sindh. More than 5,000 individuals have received training, with over 1,200 securing employment

ISLAMABAD: First Lady, Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari on Thursday visited the headquarters of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) here and chaired a meeting to review its initiatives for poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, financial inclusion and social development. Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid and Secretary BISP Amir Ali Ahmad briefed her on the programme's initiatives, achievements and ongoing initiatives. A Presidency's news release said. The First Lady appreciated BISP's role in supporting vulnerable families and advancing women's empowerment. She emphasised financial literacy and public awareness to help beneficiaries make informed financial decisions and access their entitled assistance with dignity and transparency. She called for stronger grievance redressal mechanisms, exploring collaboration with Lady Health Workers to expand community outreach, and greater use of social and digital media to raise awareness about BISP's programmes and services. She assured BISP of her full support in advancing its initiatives. Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted BISP's economic impact, citing a World Bank study indicating that every rupee spent through the programme generates an estimated PKR 2.34 in real income. BISP supports approximately 1.66 million full-time equivalent jobs, two-thirds in rural areas, while economic activity generated through the programme is estimated to contribute PKR 174 billion annually to the national exchequer. The First Lady was briefed on the Benazir Humanaid Program, under which more than 50,000 people have registered for market-relevant skills training linked to employment and self-employment. Training covers information technology, healthcare, hospitality and construction, with support from development partners, including the Asian Development Bank and GIZ. She also reviewed skills training delivered through the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Human Resource Research and Development Board in collaboration with the Government of Sindh. More than 5,000 individuals have received training, with over 1,200 securing employment

Govt abolishes 2,007 tech posts in NHMP, NA told

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Communications Gul Asghar Khan on Thursday informed the National Assembly that the government had abolished 2,007 technical posts in the National Highways and Motorway Police under its rightsizing policy. Responding to a Calling Attention Notice regarding the discontinuation of the previous service structure for technical staff of the Motorway Police, which had resulted in the suspension of the promotion and career progression prospects, he said the posts, including those of plumbers, electricians and other technical staff, had been abolished following federal government instructions to eliminate dying cadres. Gul Asghar Khan said the government was not limited to the Ministry of Communications but also the Ministry of National Highways and Motorway Police. He added that around 4,000 posts had also been abolished in the Pakistan Post Office. He said employees would be promoted upon completing the required service periods under the applicable policy—DNA.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD, Oct 29 (APP): The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a power suspension programme for Saturday on limited feeders due to ongoing development works being carried out by the district administration. According to an IESCO spokesperson, electricity supply will remain suspended in Islamabad Circle from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Shehzad Town, ISI (Independent), Shakar Parian, Pak China Center, CDA Flat, G-8 Markaz, Sohan, Sharif Abad, LOHIBER, Chirah, Cortley Hotel, G-10/3, H-8/1-10/4, H-11/4, PHA-II, D-1/2, D-2, N.J.H, Mohra Noor, Pindi Point, Barrian, PAF, MCM, Mangial, Koti Sattian, Serena Complex, Serena Hotel, K Block, Comstek, Karakum Hight, PHA, Taramari, Chatta Bakht-awar, Kund Rajgan, Rehara, CM Pak Zong, Kurri, Ti Park, Kingdome University, Comsats Feeders, In Rawalpindi City Circle power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Range Road, Sehah, Chakra, I-14-3, SPT, Cobe Line, Faziya Colony, E-Block, New Mulder, Hakti, AFOHS, Al-Noor Colony, Qadeer Road, KRL, Farooq-e-Azam, Tariq Shaheed, Sector 4, Affandi Colony, Askari T/C, Malhotra, Shahad, Gulah, Gagan, Chabb, Maty Gardi, Shamas Colony, RMF, Lakho Road, Ratta, Railway Colony, N, Dhoke Chaudhrian feeders. In Rawalpindi Cantt Circle power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Nari, Fauji Foundation Hospital, Car Chowk, Pindi Road, AOWHS, Ex-Lawyer Colony D, Park View, F-8 C/O Line, F-6 Machine Moh, Akram Shaheed, COD Kala, Mahboob Shaheed, RCI EXPRESS, T.H.Q, KRL Colony, Ka-

huta City, LEHTRAR, KASHMIR ROAD, SIR SYED ROAD, Jail Park, PWD-I, NIAZIAN, SCHEME-III, MORGHAH, ASKARI-7, Kohala, UC Lakhan, Chungi No. 22, Chountra, Maj Muhammad Hanif, CHOWK PINDI NOOR, Doharan, Madra-II, INDUSTRIAL, SUKHU, SYED KASRAN, CHAK BALI KHAN-2, Dhok Noor, Gulshanabad, ROSE LANE, Adyala Jali, Shehgan, Defence Road, Samar Zar, Askari-14, Sudhan Gali, Dhulli-1, Humayun-1, Gulistan-e-Fatima, Hay-Flat, Humayun Road, New 502 Workshop feeders from 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM: New GHQ Feeder, from 08:00 AM to 03:00 PM: Nara Matore Feeder. Similarly, in Attok Circle power supply will remain suspended from 07:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Lalazar feeder, from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: Nawababad, Jalala, DHRAIK, Sangiani, Pind Parian, N Block, Model Town, Kashif Gul, Burhan, Brahma, Rashid Minhas, Sirka (D/C), Shadi Khan (D/C), CHACH, Shahdher (D/C), Qazi Abad T/C, Power Channel Co T/C, Shams Abad T/C, Hattian T/C, Ghour Ghushli, NARTOPA, Fawara Chowk, Katcheri 4/C, Dhoke Fateh 4/C, Attok Cantt, Darul Islam T/C, Malhotra, Naka Kalan, Noorpur, Moorar, Jand-I, Jand-2, Mahfooz Shaheed, Gulah, Gagan, Chabb, Maty Gardi, B-17, SARA-E-KHARBOZA, Shah Allah Ditta, Gulshan-e-Sehat (E-18), AWT Feeders. In Jhelum Circle power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM: F-7 (Kutchery), Ajmal Shaheed, ATM, F-3 (Gul Afshan), Zubair Shaheed, Langer Pur, Kayyala, Faten Pur, Baba Mehdi Shah, F-8 C/O Line, F-6 Machine Moh, Akram Shaheed, COD Kala, P.T.C, Chit Housing, F10 (Kala Base)—DNA.

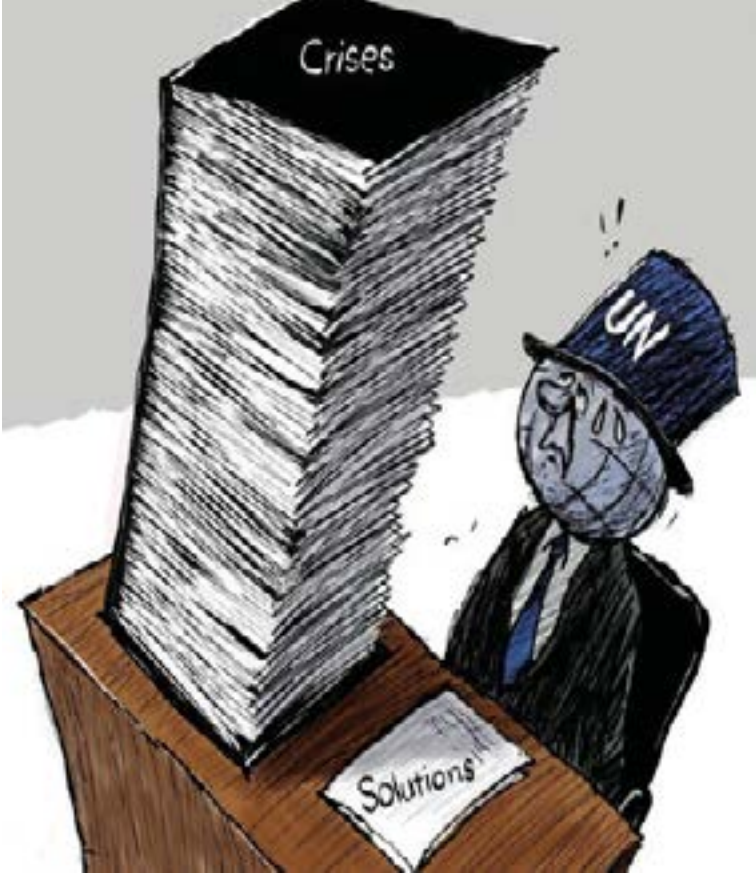
Advertisement for Ashraf Industries Pvt. Ltd. featuring a list of martial arts disciplines (Judo, Karate, Kung-Fu, Jiu-Jitsu, Taekwondo) and uniforms, with a graphic of a person in a red uniform and the slogan 'WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED'.

Women on Wheels

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

THE freedom to move independently is often taken for granted, but for many women in Pakistan, it remains an aspiration. It is not just a matter of social expectations, transport constraints and concerns about personal safety. The growing number of women riding motorcycles and electric scooters is beginning to change this reality. Yet, if this modest revolution is to endure, the state must ensure that women can exercise their freedom without being subjected to harassment, intimidation or an expensive risk. The economic circumstances encouraging this change are difficult to ignore. Instability in the Middle East and uncertainty surrounding global energy supplies have renewed concerns about petroleum prices. For a country heavily dependent on imported energy, fluctuations in international oil markets translate into higher transport costs and additional pressure on household budgets. As families struggle to manage the rising cost of living, electric scooters offer a relatively economical alternative for short urban journeys. For women, particularly students and working professionals, their significance extends well beyond fuel savings. In cities such as Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi, women are increasingly using electric scooters to reach educational institutions, offices and markets. For some, the choice means no longer waiting for an unreliable bus; for others, it reduces dependence on family members or expensive ride-hailing services. The time saved can be spent on education, employment or family responsibilities. In this sense, independent mobility is not merely a matter of convenience. It is closely connected with women's economic participation and access to opportunity. This development is not unusual in international terms. In Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and India, motorcycles and scooters have long been part of everyday life, with women using them for work, education and domestic responsibilities. In densely populated cities, two-wheelers offer affordability and flexibility that larger vehicles cannot always provide. Electric models are extending these advantages while reducing dependence on conventional fuels. Pakistan's growing community of women riders is therefore participating in a broader transformation in urban mobility, although social attitudes and infrastructure continue to shape the pace of change. The difficulty is that the freedom offered by a scooter can be undermined by the behaviour of other road users. Women riders have reported unwelcome remarks, aggressive overtaking, deliberate obstruction and excessive honking. Such conduct can turn an ordinary journey into an experience of apprehension. Even when an incident does not result in physical injury, the fear of repetition may discourage a woman from riding again. The consequences are particularly serious for those whose employment or education depends on affordable and reliable transport. The problem should not be confused with the act of riding itself. A woman on a motorcycle is neither inviting attention nor challenging the lawful rights of others. She is using a public road under the same rules that govern every other citizen. The responsibility for harassment rests with the perpetrator, not with

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Tehran's Diplomatic Bombshell

Qamar Bashir



The war with Iran has transformed American military installations across the Gulf from instruments of deterrence into potential targets of retaliation. Reports and assessments of American military repositioning toward Israel, Jordan and other locations reflect this wider vulnerability. For Washington, geographic access remains a military advantage; for Gulf governments, that same access increasingly carries the possibility of devastating retaliation. Saudi Arabia consequently faces an exceptionally difficult choice. American air defence systems, intelligence cooperation, maintenance arrangements and advanced weapons remain important to its security. Yet the presence of American forces can expose Saudi oil installations, airports, industrial infrastructure and civilian populations to Iranian or Houthi attacks. The attacks around Ras Tanura have demonstrated how rapidly regional warfare can threaten energy supplies and global economic stability. Riyadh must therefore calculate whether American protection is reducing its vulnerability or contributing to it. Here lies the first possible hidden significance of the Tehran meeting. Iran may have sought assurances that Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye would neither participate in renewed American-Israeli attacks nor facilitate them through military installations, air-space, intelligence or logistical support. No publicly disclosed agreement establishes that such promises were made. Nevertheless, the subject would be inherently consistent with Iran's longstanding concern about foreign military infrastructure being used against it. The second possibility points in the opposite direction. The Makkah Pact countries may have arrived not simply as sympathetic neighbours, but as a col-

lective deterrent. Their defence agreement treats an attack against one member as a matter of common security. The presence of nuclear-armed Pakistan, NATO member Türkiye and economically powerful Saudi Arabia could therefore convey a warning that further Iranian or Houthi attacks against Saudi territory risk widening the conflict. Collective defence, however, does not automatically establish a commitment to join an American war. This dual character makes the delegation particularly significant. It could simultaneously reassure Iran against foreign aggression and warn Tehran against attacking Saudi Arabia. Such diplomacy is not necessarily contradictory. It reflects an attempt to establish reciprocal restraint: regional states would avoid becoming launching platforms for attacks on Iran, while Iran would avoid retaliating against countries that remained outside the fighting. Whether such an understanding was actually reached remains uncertain. The third possibility concerns Qatar's parallel diplomatic initiative. Unlike the three Makkah Pact countries, Qatar has maintained an intermediary role between Washington and Tehran. Its proposed seven-day confidence-building framework sought to bridge disagreements over nuclear activities, sanctions, maritime access and the wider conflict. Reports also indicate support for mediation from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. Thus, the Tehran consultations could represent complementary diplomatic tracks rather than competing initiatives. Iran's response to the Qatari proposal was nevertheless uncompromising. Tehran objected to demands for nuclear concessions before achieving economic relief, insisting that the American blockade of Iranian ports and restrictions on oil exports must be addressed first. Washington, conversely, wanted nuclear commitments from the beginning. The dispute was therefore not merely over the contents of a peace agreement, but over which party would surrender its leverage before receiving guarantees. The most consequential outcome of the Tehran meeting may lie not in what was publicly announced, but in what was deliberately withheld. A day-long consultation involving the defence minister of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan's army chief, Türkiye's intelligence chief and Iran's highest political and security authorities could hardly have been confined to the four lines of the joint communiqué. Such meetings necessarily involve extensive deliberations on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats arising from an ongoing war, including American military bases, Iranian retaliation, Saudi security, the Strait of Hormuz, economic sanctions and the consequences of a genuine American peace initiative. Drawing upon my experience attending high-level

meetings as Press Secretary and media adviser to the President of Pakistan, I know that public statements rarely disclose the full substance of sensitive diplomatic and security consultations. The positive assessments expressed by the Iranian leadership and the visiting delegations strongly suggest that the participants found sufficient common ground to explore practical understandings and a coordinated pathway for responding to future developments. Such understandings may include assurances of non-participation in renewed attacks against Iran, restrictions on the use of regional military facilities, reciprocal restraint toward Gulf countries and mechanisms for further consultations should Washington and Israel resume hostilities. Kuwait and the other Gulf countries will therefore become important indicators. Their decisions concerning American bases, airspace, logistical support and diplomatic engagement could reveal whether the Tehran initiative developed into a genuine understanding or aggression arrangement. The Houthi's conduct will be equally revealing. A sustained reduction in attacks on Saudi infrastructure could indicate that Tehran and Riyadh have found a mechanism to separate Gulf security from the wider American-Israeli confrontation, although Houthi decision-making cannot simply be equated with Iranian instructions. The timing adds urgency. Reports indicate concern about renewed American and Israeli military action around the November 3 American midterm elections. Whether such an offensive actually occurs remains uncertain. But if it does, the military effectiveness of the campaign will depend partly on regional access, intelligence, logistics and the willingness of neighbouring governments to absorb the consequences of Iranian retaliation. Ultimately, Tehran may have achieved something strategically important without obtaining a single publicly declared concession: it has compelled influential regional governments to discuss security with Iran rather than merely discuss Iran with Washington. That is a meaningful diplomatic shift, even if its durability remains untested. There is a verdict on the Tehran meeting: it was a genuine diplomatic breakthrough, but in what was publicly announced, but in what was deliberately withheld. A day-long consultation involving the defence minister of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan's army chief, Türkiye's intelligence chief and Iran's highest political and security authorities could hardly have been confined to the four lines of the joint communiqué. Such meetings necessarily involve extensive deliberations on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats arising from an ongoing war, including American military bases, Iranian retaliation, Saudi security, the Strait of Hormuz, economic sanctions and the consequences of a genuine American peace initiative. Drawing upon my experience attending high-level

Israeli Democracy under the Shadow of War

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The problem, therefore, comes from two directions. External adversaries may seek to exploit political divisions, while domestic actors can weaken public confidence through misinformation, intimidation and the manipulation of fear. When these pressures operate together, voters find it increasingly difficult to distinguish a genuine...

WO days before Israel's national election, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has posted an AI-generated image on X showing a mushroom cloud rising over Tel Aviv, with the city engulfed in flames. Sharing a warning by bright-wing commentator Yuval Bloomberg, he suggested that two atomic bombs striking Israel would make ordinary political disputes irrelevant. The message invoked the danger of a second Holocaust if voters chose a leader unable to confront Iran. The image was more than an alarming campaign message. It reflected the increasingly bitter struggle over Israel's political future, in which the threat of war has become a powerful instrument of electoral persuasion. Rather than focusing on governance, accountability and the performance of the government, the campaign once again turned towards fear and national security. Opposition leaders responded sharply. Gadi Eisenkot, a former army chief whose Yashar party was leading Netanyahu's Likud in recent polls, accused the prime minister of relying on lies and scare tactics. Former prime minister Naftali Bennett called the message a lie, while Yair Golan of the Democrats urged that Netanyahu be kept away from social media. Netanyahu subsequently released a video showing an American missile defence battery warning that Iran and its allies might attempt a tactical nuclear election. He also threatened Tehran with severe retaliation. Yet reports in the Israeli media presented a more complicated picture. Channel 13 reported that the current army chief, Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir, saw no operational need to attack Iran, and that senior defence officials had no concrete intelligence indicating Iranian intentions. Ynet's military correspondent Ron Ben-Yishai similarly warned that the principal danger was miscommunication rather than evidence of an imminent attack. These conflicting messages raise an important question: where does the fear come from? Is it a genuine threat, or is it manipulation? Israel faces genuine external threats. Its confrontation with Iran, the possibility of attacks by allied groups and the vulnerability of strategic infrastructure cannot simply be dismissed as campaign inventions. Iranian officials have also issued threats against Israeli energy

facilities, desalination plants and bridges. Such statements deserve serious attention. However, the existence of a security threat does not make every political claim credible. When a prime minister invokes the prospect of nuclear destruction shortly before polling day, the public has a right to ask whether the warning rests on verified intelligence or is intended to influence voting behaviour. National security requires reliable information and responsible leadership, not the constant amplification of fear. The danger is particularly serious because Israel's election campaign has also been marked by the spread of fabricated material generated through artificial intelligence. The legal status of religiously underlying this debate, the election authorities had received more than 276 complaints, almost five times the number reported in 2022. The Shin Bet, Israel's domestic security service, was also providing protection to opposition leaders facing threats from fellow Israelis. The problem, therefore, comes from two directions. External adversaries may seek to exploit political divisions, while domestic actors can weaken public confidence through misinformation, intimidation and the manipulation of fear. When these pressures operate together, voters find it increasingly difficult to distinguish a genuine warning from a political tactic. And when fear is widespread and the temptation to concentrate power is strongest, Political leaders have a duty to distinguish genuine security warnings from campaign rhetoric. Opposition parties must be able to compete without intimidation, and voters must have access to credible information. Israel's democratic future will depend on more than the outcome of a single election. It will depend on whether its institutions can withstand the combined pressures of war, political polarisation and constitutional conflict. A country cannot protect its democracy merely by warning that it is under threat. It must also preserve the rules, freedoms and institutional checks that make democratic government worth defending.

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Briefs
Pakistan, Türkiye reaffirm 'eternal brotherhood'

FROM PAGE 01
The Islamabad reception reflected the endearing warmth of Pakistan-Türkiye relations and the determination of both countries to build on their brotherly partnership. Often described in terms of an unbreakable brotherhood, the relationship continues to serve as a prominent example of close ties between two nations, with both sides seeking to strengthen cooperation and broaden their engagement in the years ahead.

ATC sentences Imaan, Hadi to 10 years prison

FROM PAGE 01
The IHC had heard their appeals last week against an Oct 10 ATC order dismissing petitions challenging the framing of charges and the inclusion of terrorism-related provisions. The high court issued notices and said it would decide how to proceed after receiving responses from the parties. Prisoners of conscience in their statements recorded under Section 342(p) vowed to examine the misuse of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Imaan and Hadi had denied the charges and alleged that they were being targeted while human rights work and provision of pro bono legal assistance and services to the marginalised and oppressed communities. "I am a prisoner of conscience who has been at the receiving end of state persecution," the statements read. Imaan pointed out that the entire jail trial had been "challenged by the IHC as well as the SC. Further, the trial was conducted with Imaan and her husband being presented in a cage, preventing effective communication with her counsel or the court, she said. "From day one, our constitutional rights to fair trial, due process and basic human dignity have been infringed," she stated. She also noted that the couple had been incarcerated for over nine months and handed 17-year sentences a day after their arrest on Jan 23.

PTI affirms Afridi to remain...

FROM PAGE 01
secretariat for the "purpose of clarity and emphasis", PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that Afridi "remains and shall continue" to serve as the KP chief minister with the "confidence and support" of party founder and ex-premier Imran Khan. "All PTI members, officers, members, parliamentarians and party functionaries are hereby directed not to convene or participate in any meeting, introduce any agenda, initiate or entertain any proposal, or encourage or engage in any discussion concerning the nomination, replacement or consideration for the office of chief minister," the notification said. "It is categorically reiterated that no one other than the founding chairman has the authority to nominate an alternative candidate or alter this decision in any manner whatsoever. His decisions in this regard are final and binding upon all party members," it said. In a post on X, Barrister Gohar said that all party members part of the KP Assembly were a "source of pride for us" and that they had stayed loyal to Imran, complied with every decision and remained steadfast. "However, in view of the unnecessary speculation and discussions circulating on social media and certain TV channels regarding the chief minister, this notification has been issued to provide further clarification and reassure party workers and supporters that decisions within our party are made solely in accordance with the directives of Imran Khan sahib," he said.

Agricultural training in China spurs startups, with 107 Pakistani professionals
The programme targets young agricultural professionals who can apply their training in their workplaces or businesses after returning to Pakistan

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Pakistani agricultural professionals are looking to China's farming technologies for ways to address challenges at home, as 107 participants in the third batch of a bilateral training programme continue their studies at Northwest A&F University, China. Since the programme began, 885 participants have completed training and returned to Pakistan, where they have helped establish 15 startups and train more than 50,000 farmers and other agricultural professionals, the China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday quoting a Pakistani official. The programme was highlighted at the China-Pakistan Agricultural Science and Technology Exchange Event, themed "Touyan Program: Empower Agriculture, Sustain Tomorrow," held in Yangling, Shaanxi, China, on October 27 alongside the 33rd Yangling Agricultural Hi-Tech Fair and the 2026 Shanghai Cooperation Organization Agricultural Expo. Samina Naurin, project director at Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC), said the programme was designed to address practical challenges in Pakistan's agricultural sector, according to CEN. Nine priority areas were identified in consultation with agricultural universities, experts and government departments. These areas include farm mechanization, crop speed breeding, advanced technologies such as drones, the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence; seed production and processing; livestock disease surveillance; livestock breeding and genomics; aquaculture; high-efficiency irrigation and water management; and fruit and vegetable processing. The training combines academic instruction with hands-on experience. Participants are also placed with Chinese enterprises and international organizations to learn how agricultural technologies are applied in practice, Naurin said. The programme targets young agricultural professionals who can apply their training in their workplaces or businesses after returning to Pakistan. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in agriculture and be no older than 35. The selection process also considers their professional experience and their organizations' capacity to adopt new technologies, she said. "885 participants had completed training and returned to Pakistan," Naurin told CEN. She pinpointed the programme had begun producing results in Pakistan. According to her, returning trainees had helped establish 15 startups, develop demonstration farms and train more than 50,000 farmers, seed-company personnel and other participants. She added that organizations in Pakistan had also adopted new technologies and updated policies following the training. Abdul Samad, founder and CEO of Pakistani agricultural startup NanoDrop, is among the 107 participants in the third batch. For him, the programme offers an opportunity to explore technologies that could be adapted to Pakistan's agricultural conditions. "Many things are imported from China to Pakistan. So it's time to work on technology transfer in Pakistan," Samad said. NanoDrop works on water filtration and irrigation-related applications. Samad said its membrane technology can purify saline water without electricity, with potential for use in agriculture, domestic water supply and industry. During his first week in China, Samad said he had been impressed by greenhouse technologies and equipment that could help turn dry land into productive growing areas. He had taken photographs, collected brochures and seed samples, and obtained contacts from technology providers to learn more about their products and applications.

Egypt's El-Dafrawy returns as full PFL Dubai card confirmed for Coca-Cola Arena

DNA
DUBAI: The full card has been announced for PFL Dubai, set to take place on Saturday, Nov. 14 at the Coca-Cola Arena. The event marks PFL's fourth card in Dubai and its first in the city since the merger with Most Valuable Promotions, staged in cooperation with the Dubai Sports Council and the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism. The 15-fight card will be headlined by a heavyweight (265 lbs.) world title bout between reigning champion Vadim Nemkov (20-2) and No.3-ranked Sergei Bilibestniy (15-4) Nemkov, a protégé of Mixed Martial Arts legend Fedor. Fedor, the "Last Emperor" of MMA, has not lost in more than a decade, going unbeaten in his last 15 appearances. Bilibestniy, who became the first fighter to stop Karl Williams and recently finished former UFC Champion Renan Ferreira, also represents Team Fedor and has shared training camps with Nemkov. Nemkov said, "I always try to finish fights with a submission or a choke. Like Fedor says, fights should end early. But fighting is unpredictable. Things don't always go according to plan, so you have to be ready to adjust during the fight". Bilibestniy said, "I'm in the middle of my training in Moscow, there's not long left now until a real, action-packed fight. A true test for myself. I want to treat the fans to a great, exciting bout between two big Russian guys. My mindset is excellent, I'm ready for battle. See you all soon!" The co-main event is a coming-out party for Namur's undefeated No.4-ranked Patrick "The Belgian Bomber" Habiora (9-0), who stepped outside Europe for the first time in his professional career after a 20-second knockout of former UFC champion Benson Henderson in Brussels.

Saudi Pro League partners with Football Manager

DNA
RIVAD: The Saudi Pro League has announced it is collaborating with Football Manager, adding the famous gaming title to the partners of the Roshn-sponsored competition. This coincides with the SPL's inclusion for the first time in the new version of the game, scheduled for global release on Nov. 10, according to the league's X account on Wednesday night. This partnership is a part of the league's efforts to expand its base of commercial partners and attract brands from diverse sectors. It wants to enhance the SPL's commercial value, open new avenues for revenue growth, and maximize returns for clubs through marketing rights. Under the partnership, Football Manager 27, one of the world's leading simulation games, will feature the 18 SPL clubs with their logos, kits, and player images. The partnership represents the latest addition to the SPL's commercial sponsorships and highlights its efforts to explore the opportunities provided by the electronic games sector.

PFF-Iran MoU Boosts Pak's Football and Futsal Future

The agreement builds on existing professional links between the two federations. Pakistan's men's and women's national futsal teams are already coached by Iranian professionals Ali Imani and Fatemeh Sharif Noghabi, respectively

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's football and futsal development drive has received a significant boost with the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) and the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to expand cooperation in youth football, futsal, coaching education and technical development. The agreement, signed by PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani and FFIRI President Mehdi Taj, establishes a framework for closer sporting collaboration between the neighbouring countries, with a shared vision of nurturing young talent, improving technical standards and creating new opportunities for players, coaches and officials. The partnership offers Pakistan an important opportunity to benefit from Iran's established expertise in international and Asian futsal, while strengthening its own development pathways and expanding opportunities for emerging footballers. Iran's experience in elite competition, player development and coaching could provide valuable technical support as Pakistan works to build a stronger and more competitive futsal structure.



The agreement builds on existing professional links between the two federations. Pakistan's men's and women's national futsal teams are already coached by Iranian professionals Ali Imani and

under the MoU, both federations intend to facilitate friendly matches, joint training camps and invitational tournaments for youth national teams. The partnership also covers talent identification, academy development, youth competitions and coach education, including opportunities for PFF youth coaches to participate in FFIRI training programmes and coaching courses. Futsal development is another key pillar of the agreement. The two sides plan to explore national team friendlies, joint coaching camps, coaching and refereeing courses, and the possible deployment of Iranian futsal coaches and technical experts to Pakistan. Sharing expertise in the organisation and management of domestic futsal leagues could also help Pakistan strengthen its national competition structure and create a more sustainable pathway for emerging players. The broader cooperation framework extends to grassroots football, women's football, physical preparation, refereeing, sports science, sports medicine and the development of football facilities. The federations may also collaborate on international friendly matches involving senior men's and women's teams, youth sides, Olympic teams and futsal squads.

Fatemeh Sharif Noghabi, respectively. Their involvement provides a practical foundation for deeper technical cooperation, knowledge-sharing and the adoption of modern training methods.

JUI-F sought governor's rule in KP, says Naqvi

FROM PAGE 01
Naqvi's claim came as he hit back at JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman over his remarks a day earlier, including about the purpose of the interior minister's visit to Iran. Naqvi rejected the governor's claim that the Pakistani official had travelled to Iran to negotiate a defence agreement, saying the visit was instead aimed at dealing with the ongoing regional crisis. "This was completely not a defence agreement," he said, adding that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had specifically assigned him responsibilities concerning the ongoing crisis. "I do not go out of enthusiasm. The prime minister has tasked me with the current crisis of this war and entrusted me with things that are why I'm here," he said. The interior minister said he had previously held Fazl in personal regard, but accused the JUI-F chief of sowing division and undermining mutual respect through his recent remarks. "Some things do not befit a politician," Naqvi said. The Senate session grew increasingly acrimonious until the day after the JUI-F lawmakers, with Kamran protesting against his remarks and the chair repeatedly calling for order in the House. Naqvi also accused the JUI-F of sowing division and undermining mutual respect through his recent remarks. "Some things do not befit a politician," Naqvi said. The Senate session grew increasingly acrimonious until the day after the JUI-F lawmakers, with Kamran protesting against his remarks and the chair repeatedly calling for order in the House. Naqvi also accused the JUI-F of sowing division and undermining mutual respect through his recent remarks. "Some things do not befit a politician," Naqvi said. The Senate session grew increasingly acrimonious until the day after the JUI-F lawmakers, with Kamran protesting against his remarks and the chair repeatedly calling for order in the House. Naqvi also accused the JUI-F of sowing division and undermining mutual respect through his recent remarks. 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