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Information Minister says governance in KP at lowest ebb

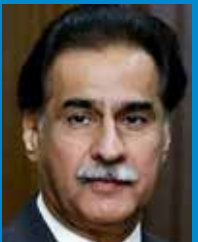
Detailed News On Page-01

CM Punjab says five new plans kick-started

Detailed News On Page-01

Speaker National Assembly hailed Security forces

Detailed News On Page-03



Long march issue

Tarar tears into PTI over terrorism, KP governance

In a statement, Tarar rejected PTI's demand for broader political consultations on security matters, arguing that the federal government had repeatedly sought cooperation from all political stakeholders over the past three years

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar has strongly criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), accusing the party of adopting a contradictory approach towards terrorism and failing to effectively implement counterterrorism measures in the province. In a statement, Tarar rejected PTI's demand for broader political consultations on security matters, arguing that the federal government had repeatedly sought cooperation from all political stakeholders over the past three years. He claimed that PTI had largely ignored these proposals and was only now responding due to mounting political pressure in KP.

Continued on Page 06

PM, Nawaz review political situation

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif held a meeting in Lahore on Sunday and discussed the overall political situation in the country, along with matters of international importance. According to sources, the two leaders reviewed the prevailing political landscape and exchanged views on national and regional developments. Punjab Chief Minister

Maryam Nawaz was also present during the meeting. The consultations came at a time when efforts to establish dialogue between the government and the opposition remain stalled. Earlier rounds of talks between the government and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) failed to produce a breakthrough, with both sides unable to agree on a mutually acceptable framework for negotiations. Sources familiar with the matter said PTI had insisted

Continued on Page 06

Yemen president announces attacks on Houthis

NEWS DESK

SANAA: President of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi announced the launch of military operations to recapture the country's remaining territories controlled by the Houthis.

Another News on Back Page

"Today we are embarking on a decisive phase in the history of our nation," Al-Alimi said, adding that the state had made "great sacrifices" in choosing the path of peace. Al-Alimi said the operations were aimed at restoring security, rights and dignity to citizens in areas controlled by the Houthis, stressing that those citizens were not targets of the military operations.

Continued on Page 06

Pak, Russia to discuss Afghan issue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will participate in the 8th meeting of the Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan, scheduled to be held in Moscow on Monday. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Mohammad Sadiq, will lead the country's delegation at the consultations. Pakistan's Ambassador to Kabul will also attend the meeting as part of the delegation. The Moscow Format Consultations serve as an important

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi being received by KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. – DNA

Middle East crisis

IRGC adviser says missile, weapons production intact

"During this war, we concluded that we absolutely must increase the range of our missiles, and we have now moved in that direction," he said. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran will upgrade the range of its missiles following the war with the US as American forces are now positioned as much as 1,000 km (621 miles) away from the Iranian coast, Army spokesperson Mohammad Akraminia told Fars news on Sunday. "During this war, we concluded that we absolutely must increase the range of our missiles, and we have now moved in that direction," he said. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that there is no military solution to his country's conflict with the

Continued on Page 06

US carrier George H W Bush visits Thailand

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush arrived off Thailand's resort island of Phuket on Sunday with about 4,800 personnel aboard for a rest-and-recreation break after months of supporting US operations in

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

CM Punjab launches five projects

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz launched five road projects under Punjab Public-Private Partnership Authority. The projects include the Muridke-Narowal, Shakargarh-Narowal, Faisalabad Ring Road, Faisalabad-Sahianwala and Faisalabad-Samundri-Rajana roads, and are expected to generate revenue of 22 billion rupees. Electronic toll plazas will be established on these roads, while private contractors will collect tolls through the National Highway Authority system and maintain the roads for seven years. Briefing the Chief Minister, Senior Provincial Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb said four more roads, including Bahawalpur-Yazman, Yazman-Ahmedpur Sharqia, Raiwind-Changa Manga and Gajju Mata-Kasur, would also be handed over to private contractors.

Minister calls for national unity

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik has called for national unity to protect the country's frontiers and effectively counter the menace of terrorism. Addressing a public gathering in Lahore today, he said the nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistan Army, whose sacrifices for the country will forever be remembered. Ali Pervaiz Malik said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and COAS and CDF, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir are taking all possible measures to protect the country from terrorism. He also urged Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi to fulfill his responsibilities as terrorism is once again resurfacing in the province.

Naqvi accuses KP CM Afridi of 'sabotaging' talks

KP CM Afridi releases list of demands; Naqvi says draft differs from what negotiating teams finalized

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday accused Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Sohail Afridi of attempting to sabotage negotiations between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the federal government. The Imran Khan-founded party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led federal government held two rounds of negotiations on Friday and Saturday to prevent the party's long march towards Islamabad. However, the talks ended without an agreement after the two sides disagreed on key issues, including access to jailed PTI founder Imran Khan and military operations in KP's restive areas. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, the security czar said that 99% of the points in the agreement had been agreed upon during the negotiations.

Continued on Page 06

PTI begins Islamabad long march

KP CM Sohail Afridi leads party workers from Lakki Marwat's Gandhi Chowk

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has begun its long march towards Islamabad from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat after talks with the federal government failed to break

Continued on Page 06

Eight India-backed terrorists killed in KP's DI Khan operation

Three key Fitna al-Khawarij commanders also among terrorists killed during IBO, say sources

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Security forces killed eight India-backed terrorists during an intelligence-based operation conducted in Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, security sources said on Sunday. The operation was conducted after intelligence reports indicated the presence of Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists in the area, security sources said. According to security sources, three key commanders of Fitna al-Khawarij were also among the eight terrorists killed during the operation. A large cache of weapons and ammunition was recovered from the killed terrorists, along with foreign currency, the sources said. The IBO comes a day after security forces killed 11 militants in separate operations in KP and Balochistan. The operations were carried out in KP's South Waziristan and the Gorindar-Mashkel area in Balochistan under ongoing operations against militants, security sources had said. Pakistan has witnessed a sharp rise in cross-border terrorist incidents, particularly

ly in KP and Balochistan, since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021.

Pakistan recorded its highest monthly number of militant attacks in 12 years during September 2026. According to data compiled by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), an Islamabad-based independent think tank monitoring anti-state violence in the region, 225 militant attacks were recorded across the country in September, compared with 199 in August – an increase of 13%. Militant attacks increased for the third consecutive month. Islamabad has repeatedly urged Kabul to prevent its territory from being used by militant organisations to carry out attacks inside Pakistan. Pakistan maintains that the Afghan Taliban authorities have failed to take effective action against groups responsible for attacks on Pakistani security forces and civilians, a position Kabul has disputed. Despite multiple rounds of talks, Islamabad and Kabul have yet to resolve their differences, with the issue of militant groups operating from Afghan soil remaining a major point of contention between the two sides.





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Data governance council established

RAWALPINDI: The Ministry of Energy's Power Division has established a Power Sector Data Governance Council and introduced a sector-wide Data Governance Framework to ensure the quality, verification, exchange and effective use of data for more than 40 million electricity consumers.

The initiative aims to establish common standards and coordinated procedures for managing data across the power sector, supporting more reliable and integrated information for policymaking, planning, regulation, monitoring and investment decisions. Energy sector reforms expert and technology entrepreneur Talha Khalid said the initiative would help ensure the availability of reliable, timely and integrated information, decision-making in the power sector more effective. He said harmonising data standards and definitions across institutions would improve information sharing, monitoring and institutional coordination. The framework would establish clear standards and responsibilities for the collection, verification, protection, exchange and use of information. Khalid said the importance of reliable and integrated data was increasing with the ongoing reforms and modernisation of the power sector.—APP

Action taken against 15 illegal housing societies

Dera Ismail Khan , Oct 04 (APP):The district administration has intensified its crackdown on unapproved housing schemes operating without a No Objection Certificate (NOC), taking legal action against 15 housing societies in Dera Ismail Khan. The operation was carried out on the directives of the provincial government and Deputy Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan to curb illegal housing developments and protect citizens from fraudulent property investments. Assistant Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Dr. Muhammad Hamid Siddiq, accompanied by the Tehsil Municipal Officer, officials of the Land Use and Building Control Authority (LUB-CA), revenue field staff and representatives of relevant departments, led the operation in different areas of the tehsil. The crackdown targeted unapproved housing societies along Bhakkar Road, Darya Band Road and in New Baloch Nagar. The housing societies against which legal action was initiated included Ali Garden Phase III, Gulshan-e-Umar, Gulshan-e-Faiz, Nawaz Garden, Hayat Garden, Al-Falah Garden, Shah Zain Society, Nayab City, Bakhtawar Garden, Saeed Garden, Bargad Garden, Al-Saif Garden, Khalid Block, Sahar-ul-Hameed and Cantt View Housing Society. During the operation, boundary walls, main gates, offices and other unauthorised structures of the housing schemes were demolished. Access roads leading to certain schemes were also removed as part of the enforcement action.—APP

SM Tanveer's success will be business community success : Bakhtawari

Zafar Bakhtawari announced a donation of Rs. 2 million for the under-construction building of the Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He said that the development of the Chamber was a welcome step for the business community

DNA

Chakwal: Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG), Zafar Bakhtawari, has said that UBG Patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer will contest the election for the presidency of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), and the business community will extend its full support to him. He said that SM Tanveer's success will be the success of the business community. He added that efforts would continue to promote a business-friendly environment and to address the issues faced by the business community, including reduction in taxes and interest rates. He expressed these views while leading a delegation to congratulate the newly elected office-bearers of the Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry,



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ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has achieved a historic and remarkable milestone by successfully retrieving more than 1,000 kanal of prime land in Sector E-12, Islamabad, worth billions of rupees, after a wait of nearly 40 years. This extraordinary achievement marks a major breakthrough in the Authority's efforts to protect valuable public assets and revive the planned development of one of Islamabad's important sectors. The long awaited recovery has been accomplished on the directions of the Honourable Minister for Interior, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, and under the dynamic leadership of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Sohail Ashraf. The operation was carried out under the supervision of Deputy Director General Enforcement, Dr. Anum Fatima



whose determined and professional efforts contributed significantly to this landmark success. The retrieval of over 1,000 kanal of land, valued at billions of rupees,



after nearly four decades of waiting is not simply an enforcement action, it is a major institutional achievement and a powerful demonstration of CDA's renewed commitment to

safeguarding public land. Land that remained entangled in a prolonged unresolved situation can now be brought back into the framework of planned development.

For almost 40 years, the delay in resolving this matter had been a significant obstacle to the development of Sector E-12. The successful recovery has removed a major impediment and created fresh opportunities for infrastructure development, public amenities and organized urban expansion. The achievement has been widely appreciated by the people of Islamabad, who have welcomed CDA's determined efforts to reclaim valuable public land and accelerate development. Citizens have expressed confidence that such decisive actions will help transform long pending development issues into tangible progress. The recovery of land worth billions of rupees after a 40 year wait sends a strong mes-

sage that CDA is firmly committed to protecting public assets and implementing the planned development of Islamabad. It also demonstrates what can be achieved when strong political direction, effective institutional leadership and professional enforcement work together with a common purpose. This landmark achievement has therefore opened a new chapter for Sector E-12. With the reclaimed land now available for planned utilization, development activities can move forward at a much faster pace, bringing renewed hope to residents, investors and the citizens of Islamabad.

The recovery of more than 1,000 kanal of land worth billions of rupees after four decades will undoubtedly be remembered as one of CDA's significant achievements, one that reflects determination, perseverance and a clear commitment to building a better, more organized and modern Islamabad.

Punjab CM opens 5 road projects

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Sunday digitally inaugurated five road projects being transferred to the Punjab Public Private Partnership (PPP) Authority, marking a new phase of public-private partnership in the province.

According to a spokesperson, the five road projects, with a combined length of 318 kilometres, include the 80-kilometre Muridke-Narowal Road, 33-kilometre Shakargarh-Narowal Road, 97-kilometre Faisalabad Ring Road, 52-kilometre Faisalabad-Sahianwa-

la Road and 56-kilometre Faisalabad-Samundri-Rajana Road. Under the PPP arrangement, private contractors will operate the toll collection system on these roads for seven years and will also be responsible for their maintenance, repair and rehabilitation. Modern electronic toll plazas will be established on the roads. The projects are expected to generate Rs 22 billion in revenue for the Punjab government. Punjab PPP Authority Vice Chairperson and Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb briefed the chief minister about the projects and

the authority's future plans. She said the processing time for PPP projects had been reduced from two years to six months to expedite their implementation. She informed that four more roads would also be transferred to the PPP mode, including the 42-kilometre Bahawalpur-Yazman Road, 43-kilometre Yazman-Ahmadpur East Road, 28-kilometre Raiwind-Changa Manga Road and 26-kilometre Gajjumata-Kasur Road. The PPP Authority is also processing projects in various sectors, including hostels, hospitals, parks, sports grounds, waste-to-energy plants, effluent treatment plants, parking plazas, tourism, water supply and recycling. PPP-based water and sanitation service projects are planned in Chakwal and Kasur, while the Tourism Department will establish a Time Travel Park in Lahore under the PPP model. Other planned projects include an FMD vaccine protection plant to help control foot-and-mouth disease in livestock.—APP

No compromise on passenger facilities

LAHORE: Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Sunday said provision of quality and comfortable travel facilities to passengers was the top priority of Pakistan Railways. He expressed these views during his surprise visit to Lahore Railway Station, where he inspected the ongoing extension work at platforms No. 2 and 4 in detail.

The minister expressed displeasure over the installation of substandard benches at Platform No. 4 and directed the authorities to immediately remove all such benches and replace them with new, standard-quality benches. He also directed that the Divisional Superintendent (DS) Office be shifted to Lahore Railway Station to ensure direct monitoring of passenger facilities, ongoing development projects and overall performance. Muhammad Hanif Abbasi inspected the family and executive lounges and reviewed air-conditioning and other facilities being provided to passengers. The passengers thanked the minister for ensuring quality facilities in the air-conditioned halls. The minister categorically stated that no compromise would be made on the standard of passenger facilities at railway stations.—APP

Dengue outbreak reaches 40

RAWALPINDI: Seven new confirmed dengue cases were registered in Rawalpindi district over the first four days of October, with 2 in the last 24 hours. Total confirmed cases reach 40, while 10 confirmed dengue patients remain admitted in isolation wards across local hospitals.

District Health Authority's updated disease surveillance report shows that hospital screenings climbed from 4,893 to 5,094 over the four days, registering 179 new suspected cases to reach 4,699 total suspected cases during 2026. While overall hospital admissions saw a minor reduction from 15 to 13 patients, the count of hospitalized confirmed dengue cases remained stable at 10.

Health officials confirmed that zero dengue-related fatalities have occurred across the district to date. The seven recent admissions were reported from union councils including CTC-8, Fauji Colony, Adyala, Wah, Pindora, Qayumabad and Dhama Syedan. High-risk zones operating above a Breteau Index of 10 expanded from 25 to 33 union councils, with peak larval concentrations recorded in Ratta Amral, Dhoke Naju, Fauji Colony, Dhoke Babu Irfan, Takht Pari and Hazara Colony. Enforcement teams lodged 81 new FIRs, sealed eight additional premises, issued 92 new challans and levied Rs. 324,000.0 in fresh penalties, bringing the cumulative total to over Rs 3.15 million in fines collected.—APP

Smog control operation in full swing across Punjab

LAHORE:Under the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the smog control operation is proceeding in full swing, with simultaneous efforts underway to monitor, prevent and enforce regulations on the ground regarding local sources of pollution.

According to a spokesperson here on Sunday, air quality conditions were expected to improve as wind speeds increase after 10:00 AM.

As part of proactive measures taken across Punjab ahead of the smog season, drone squads, night squads and "Hawk-Eye" field squads are conducting round-the-clock surveillance, while action is being taken against violators of environmental laws.

Over the past 24 hours, 220 industrial units were inspected, seven units were sealed, and fines amounting to Rs 850,000 were imposed. Operations against brick kilns involved the inspection of 379 kilns, three were demolished, four were sealed, and four cases were registered, while 10 kilns received notices and fines totaling Rs 1.2 million were levied. During a crackdown on substandard plastic, 230 locations were

inspected; four premises were sealed, 3,515 kilograms of plastic were confiscated, 45 notices were issued, and fines totaling Rs 66,000 were imposed.

To curb smoke emissions from barbecue and commercial cooking sites, 206 locations were inspected; suction hoods were installed at 86 sites, 16 premises were sealed, and fines amounting to Rs 35,000 were levied.

Water sprinkling operations to suppress dust have been intensified across Punjab, including Lahore. Over the past 24 hours, water was sprayed on 1,006 kilometers of roads, and 35 road shoulders were repaired or reconstructed.

Action against construction-related pollution is also underway, with 46 measures taken to ensure that exposed and unsecured construction materials are properly covered.

A zero-tolerance policy regarding the burning of crop residues continues to be enforced. By October 3, the harvesting of the rice crop had been completed across 815,558 acres in Punjab. To dispose of crop residues using mechanical methods, 187 balers and 1,259 Kubota ma-

chines are active in the field, having facilitated harvesting operations across 426,759 acres.

According to the Punjab government, the distribution of over 10,000 'Super Seeders' is also underway to enable the incorporation of crop residues into the soil rather than burning them. Notices have been issued to 448,712 farmers so far to prevent them from burning crop residues.

Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb stated that the battle against smog was not limited to just one season, as the government had incorporated monitoring, enforcement, mechanized farming, water sprinkling and public awareness into a comprehensive action plan.

She noted that the Punjab government had ensured there was no lapse in monitoring or field operations, with all relevant agencies active in the field and immediate action against violations being ensured. She urged citizens to refrain from burning trash and plastic, and advised farmers to adopt modern mechanized methods instead of burning crop residues.—APP

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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

Oct 26/Austria National Day

Oct 27/Turkmenistan Independence Day

Oct 28/Czech Republic National Day

Oct 29/Turkey Republic Day

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773243

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Islamabad needs expo centre, model industrial area :Zikria

ICCI to work with govt, to transform capital into a modern business hub; calls for zero tolerance for harassment of business community

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia has called for the establishment of a world-class Expo Centre in Islamabad to showcase Pakistan's products, export potential and investment opportunities before the international community, saying that the federal capital should be developed into a modern and vibrant business hub.

In an interview here on Saturday, he said the ICCI would take the lead in working with the government and all relevant stakeholders to transform Islamabad into a model business-friendly city in real terms. Referring to his election with an overwhelming mandate, he said 'Heavy is the head that wears the crown'. The honour and confidence reposed in him by the business community also carried a great responsibility, he added and said that it was his earnest desire to translate

this trust into practical achievements and deliver meaningful results for the community. "My foremost objective is to deliver for the trade and business community in a meaningful and result-oriented manner and to further strengthen the voice of ICCI," he said.

Zikria Zia said Islamabad urgently needed a new and modern industrial area, as the existing industrial estate had reached its capacity and could no longer adequately cater to the requirements of expanding businesses. He expressed confidence that the government and concerned institutions would extend their fullest cooperation for establishing a model industrial area equipped with modern infrastructure, utilities and facilities, which could help promote industrialization, investment and employment in the capital.

Speaking about the ease of doing business, the ICCI President said the Chamber would put forward practical proposals before the government to create a genuinely conducive environment for entrepreneurship

and investment. He stressed that no government department should be allowed to disgrace, threaten, intimidate or unnecessarily harass members of the business community. "The business community must be

treated as a partner in economic development. Respect, facilitation and predictability are essential if we want businesses to invest, expand and create jobs," he maintained.

He also highlighted Pakistan's immense potential in international tourism, particularly the Northern Areas, saying that the country possessed world-class scenic destinations capable of attracting tourists from across the globe. He proposed that Pakistan should actively engage the embassies of friendly and tourism-generating countries and encourage them to promote the Northern Areas among their citizens. "We need to showcase the real beauty, culture, hospitality and tourism potential of Pakistan to the world and attract international visitors to our Northern Areas," he said.

Islamabad should not remain merely the political capital of Pakistan but should also emerge as a leading centre for business, exhibitions, investment and international trade, he concluded.

571 suspects held in two weeks

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested 571 suspects during the last two weeks in operations against drug dealers, illegal weapons holders, proclaimed offenders and court absconders across the federal capital.

An official told APP on Sunday that the arrests were made under the Drug-Free Islamabad and Weapons-Free Islamabad campaigns, as well as operations against proclaimed offenders and court absconders.

The official said police recovered 13,692 grams of hashish, 4,521 grams of heroin, 12,402 grams of ice and 892 bottles of liquor from the arrested suspects.

Under the "Weapons-Free Islamabad" campaign, police arrested 111 suspects for possessing or displaying illegal weapons. Police also recovered three Kalashnikovs, four guns and rifles, 11 daggers and 94 pistols of different calibres.

During operations against proclaimed offenders, habitual criminals and court absconders, police arrested 314 proclaimed offenders over the two-week period.

The ICT Police also conducted 114 grand combing and search operations in different areas of Islamabad to improve security and check suspicious activities.

During the operations, police checked 6,328 individuals and 4,521 households, besides checking 271 hotels, 640 shops, 3,036 motorcycles and 1,206 vehicles. For further verification, 382 suspicious individuals, 328 motorcycles and 10 vehicles were shifted to the concerned police stations. The official said the operations against criminal elements would continue to maintain law and order and ensure the safety of citizens in the federal capital.—APP

Ayaz hails security forces

ISLAMABAD, Oct 04 (APP):Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Sunday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against terrorists in Dera Ismail Khan. The Speaker commended the security forces for killing eight terrorists during the operation, describing the successful action as a manifestation of their professional expertise and operational capabilities. He said the security forces, through an effective operation, had foiled the nefarious designs of the terrorists. Ayaz Sadiq lauded the sacrifices and services rendered by the security forces in the fight against terrorism, saying the nation stood shoulder to shoulder with them in the war against terrorism. He stressed that the elimination of terrorism was imperative for ensuring peace and stability in the country. The Speaker said operations against terrorists would continue until the complete elimination of the menace of terrorism.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of Yadgar-e-Fatah after open for public, in the Federal Capital.

Free Hepatitis C screening expanded continues

The initiative is part of broader national efforts to expand access to Hepatitis C screening and treatment and move towards the elimination of the disease

ISLAMABAD: The District Health Office Islamabad has expanded access to free Hepatitis C screening, diagnosis and treatment services at several public health facilities across the capital under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C. According to official sources, free Hepatitis C screening, diagnosis and treatment facilities are now available at Rural Health Centres Tarlai, Bhara Kahu and Sihala, Community Health Centres Rawat and Shah Allah Ditta, and Basic Health Centres Sohan and Golra Sharif.

The initiative aims to facilitate early detection and timely treatment of Hepatitis C and improve access to essential healthcare services, particularly through primary healthcare facilities across the capital. The DHO said free medical consultation, screening and available Hepatitis C-related healthcare services were also being provided at government health facilities across Islamabad. Health authorities emphasized that Hepatitis C is a preventable, diagnosable and treatable disease and that timely screening and appropriate treatment can help prevent serious health complications. Citizens have been advised to visit their nearest government health facility for screening and medical consultation and to seek timely medical advice in case of suspected exposure or other health concerns. The DHO also urged citizens to adopt preventive measures and cooperate with healthcare workers to support efforts aimed at reducing the burden of Hepatitis C in the capital. The initiative is part of broader national efforts to expand access to Hepatitis C screening and treatment and move towards the elimination of the disease.—APP

AIOU Autumn 2026 admissions in full swing

ISLAMABAD, Oct 04 (APP):Admissions for Autumn 2026 semester at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) are in full swing, with last date being October 5, offering a golden opportunity for thousands of students across Pakistan and abroad to continue their education from Matric to PhD level. According to the Directorate of Admissions, the university is offering a wide range of programs in both Open Distance Learning and Face-to-Face modes, while the last date for submission of admission forms with late fee is October 5, 2026. According to the admission advertisement issued by the Directorate of Admissions, admissions are open in a wide range of programs from Matric to PhD level. As per the admission schedule, the last date for submission of fresh admission forms for Matric, FA, AD, BS, http://B.Ed, PGD and Certificate Courses is 05-10-2026 with late fee. The same deadline is also applicable for continuing students for enrollment. The university is offering programs in two modes to facilitate students from different backgrounds. Under the Open Distance Learning mode, students can apply for Matric in General, Science, Darse-e-Nizami and Open Courses, Intermediate programs including FA General, FA Darse-e-Nizami, ICom, FA Open Courses and FSc Pre-Medical and Pre-Engineering. Associate Degree programs of two years are available in BA General, BCom, BA Open Courses and also in specialized subjects like Arabic, Business Administration, Commerce, Education, English, Gender and Women Studies, International Relations, Library and Information Sciences, Mass Communication, Pakistan Studies, Political Science, Sociology and Psychology. For those who have completed their intermediate and graduation, BS programs based on HSSC of four years duration are offered in Arabic, Islamic Studies with specializations.—APP

Abbasi vows no compromise on passenger facilities

LAHORE: Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Sunday said provision of quality and comfortable travel facilities to passengers was the top priority of Pakistan Railways. He expressed these views during his surprise visit to Lahore Railway Station, where he inspected the ongoing extension work at platforms No. 2 and 4 in detail. The minister expressed displeasure over the installation of substandard benches at Platform no. 4 and directed the authorities to immediately remove all such benches and replace them with new, standard-quality benches. He also directed that the Divisional Superintendent (DS) Office be shifted to Lahore Railway Station to ensure direct monitoring of passenger facilities, ongoing development projects and overall performance. Muhammad Hanif Abbasi inspected the family and executive lounges and reviewed air-conditioning and other facilities being provided to passengers. The passengers thanked the minister for ensuring quality facilities in the air-conditioned halls. The minister categorically stated that no compromise would be made on the standard of passenger facilities at railway stations. Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Sunday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against terrorists in Dera Ismail Khan, in which eight terrorists were killed. The minister saluted the sacrifices and bravery of the security forces, saying the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the armed forces of Pakistan. He said the fight against terrorism would continue until its complete elimination, adding that the nation saluted the determination and resolve of the security forces. Hanif Abbasi said sustainable peace in the country could not be ensured without eliminating terrorism from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said the entire nation was united in the fight against terrorism and would continue to support the security forces in their efforts to establish lasting peace.—APP

Call for embedding AI, active learning in engineering curricula

ISLAMABAD :Expressing deep gratitude over being conferred the Best University Teacher Award 2025–26, Associate Professor at the School of Chemical & Materials Engineering (SCME), National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Dr. Muhammad Nouman Aslam Khan said that embedding active learning, artificial intelligence, and real-world industrial research into modern curricula is vital for preparing students to solve global energy and environmental challenges. Talking to media here on Sunday following the official announcement by NUST, Dr. Nouman emphasized that higher education must move beyond traditional lecture delivery to outcome-based education (OBE) and hands-on problem-solving. Modern engineering education demands a shift toward active learning, where abstract mathematical and data science concepts directly intersect with tangible industrial applications, Dr. Nouman said and added "Our goal at NUST is to equip students with data-driven and computational tools so they can immediately contribute to sustainable technology and deep decarbonization."

Elaborating on his academic methodology, Dr. Nouman highlighted his use of flipped classrooms, online feedback loops, and peer discussions. He said that under his framework, students prepare course material before lectures, reserving class time for interactive problem-solving, worksheet defenses, and computational simulations. He noted that this approach helps identify gaps in understanding early and encourages students to defend their reasoning rather than rely on rote learning. Explaining the strong bridge between his academic research and global needs, Dr. Nouman shared details of his international research collaborations saying that he is currently contributing to a European Commission project focused on pathways for a just energy transition and industrial decarbonization. Additionally, he worked on a Royal Society UK project utilizing machine learning models to optimize the chemical recycling of plastic waste and predict product yields. His research portfolio spans critical sustainable domains, including biomass pyrolysis, biochar and hydrogen production, membrane-based carbon capture, and wastewater treatment, he explained. Underscoring the importance of industry-academia linkages, Dr. Nouman pointed out his joint initiatives with leading national industrial partners, including Cherat Cement Company, Mubi Paints, Lucky Cement, and VS Environmental Solutions. He stressed that working on direct industrial problems, ranging from process optimization to plastic waste recycling, gives students invaluable exposure to current practical challenges. Dr. Nouman highlighted that he has mentored numerous Master's and PhD researchers, guiding theses on machine learning-integrated hydrogen production, catalytic methane decomposition, computational fluid dynamics (CFD) modeling of fluidized beds, and mixed-matrix membranes. He said that his current supervision includes research on algae-derived activated carbon and machine learning combined with Density Functional Theory (DFT) modeling for heavy-metal removal from wastewater.

Dr. Nouman, who previously earned the NUST Top Performer Award in 2024, credited the university's vibrant research ecosystem and his students' dedication for his latest honor, reiterating his commitment to advancing cutting-edge research and educational innovation in Pakistan.—DNA

ITP vans to serve citizens at different locations

The ITP said citizens could also contact its helpline 1915 for further information

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has issued a week-long schedule for its facilitation vans and Police Station on Wheel, which will provide driving licence and other police services to citizens at different locations across the federal capital from October 5 to 11. An ITP official told APP on Sunday that the mobile facilities would operate daily from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, allowing citizens to obtain services near their homes and workplaces. The Police Station on Wheel and Van-I will provide services including missing reports, character certificates, learner permits, driving licence renewal and duplicate licences, while Van-II and Van-III will provide learner permits, licence renewal, duplicate licences and driving test sheets. Monday, October 5: Police Station on Wheel will be available at COMSATS University; Van-I at Golra Darbar; Van-II at DHA Phase 2, Gate 4; and Van-III at Traffic Office Faizabad. Tuesday, October 6: Police Station on Wheel will be available at Lehtar Road; Van-I at B-17 Multi Office; Van-II at Bank Alfalah, Alipur; and Van-III at Foreign Office Checkpost. Wednesday, October 7: Police Station on Wheel will be available at

G-11 Markaz; Van-I at Naval Headquarters E-8; Van-II at Media Town Block B; and Van-III at Traffic Office Faizabad. Thursday, October 8: Police Station on Wheel will be available at Tehzeeb Bakers, Blue Area; Van-I at D-12 Markaz; Van-II at Bahria Town Phase-II; and Van-III at Traffic Office Faizabad. Friday, October 9: Police Station on Wheel will be available at I-8 Markaz; Van-I at G-14 Checkpost; Van-II at Chat-ta Bakhtawar; and Van-III at Adventure Inn Checkpost. Saturday, October 10: Police Station on Wheel will be available at Ghouri Town; Van-I at Shah Allah Ditta; Van-II at Naval Anchorage; and Van-III at Foreign Office Checkpost. Sunday, October 11: Police Station on Wheel will be available at Hostel City; Van-I at Sunday Bazaar H-9, Peshawar Mor; Van-II at Traffic Office Faizabad; and Van-III at Islamabad Club. Citizens can contact M. Jameel at 0313-5235946 for Police Station on Wheel, Dilawar Khan at 0315-5798711 for Van-I, Abdul Qadeer at 0300-2322883 for Van-II and Aqib Khan at 0320-5022304 for Van-III. The ITP said citizens could also contact its helpline 1915 for further information.—APP

Briefs

Pharmacy services formally introduced

ISLAMABAD :Pharmacy services have formally begun in Islamabad with pharmacists' professional responsibilities and job descriptions notified under the ICT TGR Rules, marking a significant step towards strengthening pharmacy practice and patient safety in the capital. According to an official of Pakistan Pharmacists Association (Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan), the notification formally recognizes pharmacy services as part of pharmacists' defined professional responsibilities and provides a framework for their practical implementation. The Pharmacy Services and Drug Control (PS&DC), ICT, has expressed its commitment to implementing the services effectively to improve public health, patient safety and the quality of healthcare delivery. The development is expected to provide pharmacists with a clearly defined role within the healthcare system and enable them to contribute more effectively to the safe, rational and quality use of medicines, he added. He said that the initiative would also help integrate pharmacists as active members of healthcare teams and strengthen medicine-related services for patients. He said the practical implementation of pharmacy services represented an important development towards improving medication safety and ensuring better healthcare services for the public.—APP

NHA completes M-6 land acquisition

ISLAMABAD :The National Highway Authority (NHA) has completed 100% land acquisition for the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway (M-6) project after making payments of about Rs15.26 billion to landowners, according to the latest official data available with Wealth Pakistan. The updated land acquisition status shows that the project requires 7,548 acres of land across its alignment, all of which has now been acquired, marking a major milestone for the construction of the 306-kilometre motorway. The NHA has disbursed approximately Rs15.26 billion against the acquired land, completing the compensation process required for the project. The M-6 motorway is being developed to improve connectivity between Sukkur and Hyderabad and strengthen the road link along the national highway network. The completion of land acquisition is expected to facilitate progress on the remaining project activities and help move the motorway towards construction and eventual completion.—APP

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EWCA, IIUI and Rotary Club host tree plantation drive

Speaking on the occasion, Tayyaba Gul highlighted the role of East-West Center alumni in strengthening ties between the East-West Center and local communities in Pakistan. She said collaborative initiatives of this nature not only contribute to environmental protection but also provide opportunities for institutions, students and communities to work together on issues of shared importance

ISLAMABAD: - The East-West Center Alumni Association (EWCA) Islamabad Chapter, in collaboration with the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) and Rotary Club Islamabad Metropolitan, organised a tree plantation drive at the university's Faculty of Environmental Sciences, with more than 150 students participating in the activity. The plantation drive was led by EWCA Islamabad Chapter President Tayyaba Gul, Professor and Acting Chairman of the Department of Environmental Sciences Dr Asad Ghufuran, and Secretary General Faiz Paracha. Rotary Club Islamabad Metropolitan President Mian Shaikat Masood also participated in the activity and planted a tree. Speaking on the occasion, Tayyaba Gul highlighted the role of East-West Center alumni in strengthening ties between the East-West Center and local communities in Pakistan. She said collaborative initiatives of this nature not only contribute to environmental protection but also provide opportunities for institutions, students and communities to work together on issues of shared importance. Former Federal Secretary for Climate Change and former President of the EWCA Islamabad Chapter Syed Abu Ahmed Akif stressed the importance of tree plantation and collective action in addressing the growing challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation.



Faiz Paracha thanked IIUI President Professor Dr Ahmed Saad Al-Ahmad, Vice President Higher Studies Dr Ahmed Shuja, Vice President Administration Dr Abdul Rasheed, Director Administration Adnan Khan, Horticulture In-charge Altaf Burki and Professor Nadeem Sheikh for

their support and participation in the initiative. EWCA Islamabad Chapter members Muhammad Ashraf, Tahir Amin and Imrana Saghar, along with university students and other participants, also took part in the plantation drive. Asad Paracha, a

child with special needs, also joined the activity and planted a tree. A total of 100 plants were planted during the drive. Rotary Club Islamabad Metropolitan donated 50 shade trees, while the remaining plants were provided by the EWCA Islamabad Chapter.

Teachers shape nation's future: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Sunday said that teachers play a central role in building an educated and civilized society. While paying tribute to the invaluable services rendered by the teachers, he said that teachers not only impart knowledge and awareness to the new generation but also inculcate in them a sense of their national responsibilities and duties. He stressed the need to recognize and appreciate the services of teachers and ensure respect for their profession and protection of their rights. Ayaz Sadiq expressed these views on the occasion of World Teachers' Day, observed annually on October 5 across the world. He said that the promotion of quality education is essential for a bright future of the country, and teachers play a key role in achieving this objective. Ayaz Sadiq said that, keeping pace with rapid technological advancements, teachers must be equipped with modern teaching tools and technologies, provided with opportunities for professional development and access to research, and supported by a conducive teaching environment and necessary facilities. The Speaker said that a strong education system can help build a knowledgeable, educated and capable workforce, which is essential for the country's economic and social development. Ayaz Sadiq said that effective measures to address the issues faced by teachers, protect their rights and enhance their professional capabilities are the need of the hour. The Speaker reaffirmed that Parliament would continue to play its active role in protecting teachers' rights, promoting education and ensuring better educational opportunities for the youth. In his message, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah said that teachers play a vital role in imparting knowledge and nurturing the intellectual and moral foundations of society. He said that recognizing the services of teachers and promoting respect and appreciation for their contributions are hallmarks of a civilized and education-oriented society. Paying tribute to teachers on World Teachers' Day, he said that their dedication, hard work and guidance are instrumental in shaping the future of the country.—APP

Solar power gains momentum across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The increasing use of solar power across Pakistan is enabling households and small businesses to generate their own electricity, reducing reliance on conventional power sources and promoting a cleaner environment. The growing adoption of solar energy reflects increasing public interest in affordable and reliable electricity, as more citizens recognize sunlight as a clean and renewable source of power. Solar panels are now becoming a common sight on rooftops of homes, shops, schools and small factories across the country, with families and business owners increasingly turning to solar systems to meet their daily electricity needs. One of the key advantages of solar power is that it enables consumers to generate electricity directly from sunlight, providing a renewable source of energy while offering an opportunity to manage household and business electricity needs more efficiently. Citizens say solar power is increasingly being viewed not only as an alternative source of electricity but also as a smart investment that can provide long-term benefits to households and businesses. The growing presence of solar panels across residential and commercial areas also reflects a broader public shift towards cleaner energy solutions and greater energy self-reliance. For many consumers, the transition to solar is therefore not merely about reducing electricity expenses but also about becoming part of a cleaner, greener and more sustainable energy future for Pakistan. Families using solar systems say the ability to produce their own electricity has given them a greater sense of self-reliance and helped them plan

their household expenses over the long term. Shafiq Ahmad, a resident of federal capital who recently installed a 3kW solar system said, "We are very happy with our decision. We are producing our own electricity during the day and our home stays bright and comfortable. It is good for our budget and good for the environment." He said the net-metering facility was also encouraging, as it allowed consumers to use solar-generated electricity during the day and feed surplus electricity into the system. "It feels good to be part of a cleaner and greener Pakistan," he added. The resident said that before installing solar panels, his family had to remain cautious about using certain household appliances during the day. "Earlier, we were very careful about using home appliances during the day. Now, with solar, we can run the washing machine and refrigerator with peace of mind because we are producing our own clean electricity," he said. Small business owners are also embracing solar energy, viewing it as a practical investment that can help them meet their daily electricity requirements. Alamgir Saeed, a small business owner running a tailoring shop said solar power had been particularly helpful for his work. "Solar has been very helpful for my work as I can run my sewing machines and lights without any worry. Customers also appreciate that my shop is always open and well-lit," he said. He said he had been looking for a long-term solution for his business and considered solar energy a worthwhile investment. "Solar is a one-time investment that provides daily benefits. It is a good investment for any small business," he added. A school teacher, Imrana Yaseen said the growing use of solar energy was also creating greater awareness among children about renewable energy. "We taught our children about renewable energy in books, and now they can see it on our own roof," she said. She described it as a proud feeling for her family to use clean energy at home and said the experience was helping children understand the importance of renewable energy in practical terms.—DNA

CDA chief directs faster work on Expressway East project

ISLAMABAD :Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Sohail Ashraf has directed officials to accelerate work on the Islamabad Expressway Service Road East project while ensuring strict compliance with approved designs and construction standards. During an inspection of the project on Saturday, the chairman reviewed progress and was briefed on ongoing works and the next phase of development. He directed the project director and relevant departments to maintain continuous field monitoring and quality control and ensure effective traffic management to minimise inconvenience to commuters. The chairman described the Expressway East project as an important infrastructure scheme for improving connectivity, traffic flow and road capacity in the capital. He also stressed that construction quality should not be compromised in efforts to meet the project timeline. During the visit, he was also briefed on an ongoing enforcement operation against unauthorised and illegal construction along the Islamabad Expressway. According to the CDA, 377 buildings have been

identified for action, including 281 commercial structures. So far, 58 buildings have been sealed, while 124 buildings between Sohan and Khanna bridges have been marked for demolition. The authority said Rs234.685 million had been recovered through land-use conversion, unauthorised construction and de-sealing charges. Around Rs3 billion remained recoverable under applicable regulations in connection with land-use conversion and violations relating to unauthorised construction, setbacks, floor area ratio and covered area. The chairman directed the relevant departments to ensure strict enforcement of building control and land-use regulations, particularly mandatory fire-safety requirements. The enforcement operation is being conducted by the CDA's Building Control Section and Enforcement Directorate in co-ordination with the district administration and Islamabad police.—DNA



Citizens urged to prevent seasonal illnesses

ISLAMABAD: Health authorities have advised citizens in the federal capital to take precautionary measures as changing weather conditions may increase the risk of seasonal infections, respiratory problems and other health concerns. Health experts have urged citizens, particularly children, older people and those with existing health conditions, to avoid sudden exposure to temperature changes and wear appropriate clothing according to the weather. They advised people to maintain good personal hygiene, wash their hands regularly and avoid close contact with individuals suffering from respiratory infections to reduce the spread of seasonal illnesses. Citizens have also been advised to stay adequately hydrated, consume a balanced diet and get sufficient rest to maintain their health during the seasonal transition. People suffering from allergies or respiratory problems should avoid exposure to dust, smoke and other irritants and seek medical advice if symptoms such as persistent cough, breathing difficulty, fever or unusual weakness develop, health experts advised. Health authorities have also stressed the importance of keeping homes and surroundings clean and avoiding stagnant water, particularly as dengue prevention remains important during the changing weather. Citizens have been urged to keep water containers covered, remove standing water from around homes and workplaces and cooperate with dengue surveillance teams conducting preventive activities across the capital. Parents have been advised to pay particular attention to children's health and ensure they remain appropriately dressed, consume safe food and water and receive timely medical attention if they develop persistent symptoms. The health authorities emphasized that simple preventive measures, timely medical consultation and greater public awareness could help citizens remain healthy during the seasonal transition.—APP

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DIG orders CIA team stronger action against criminals

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem held a meeting with DSP CIA Suleman Shah and CIA staff, directing them to make greater use of modern investigation and technical tools to strengthen action against criminal elements. An official told APP on Sunday that the meeting discussed the professional responsibilities and performance of the CIA staff, with focus on improving investigation and action against criminals. The DIG Ali directed the CIA team to perform its duties more effectively and use modern investigation methods and technical resources to trace criminals and strengthen investigations. He further directed the staff to ensure action against criminal elements without discrimination and carry out their duties professionally and in accordance with law. Ali stressed that effective investigation and proper use of modern technology were important for crime control and bringing offenders to justice.—APP

Early dengue detection, timely treatment stressed

ISLAMABAD: District Health Officer (DHO) Islamabad, Dr Syeda Rashida Batool, emphasized early recognition, timely triage and standardized clinical management of dengue to prevent complications and save lives. She made the remarks while attending an ongoing two-day refresher training on Clinical Management of Dengue at the WHO Country Office, Islamabad, where she interacted with participating healthcare providers. The training, organized in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), aims to strengthen the clinical preparedness of frontline healthcare providers and enhance their capacity to manage dengue cases effectively. Dr Syeda Rashida Batool highlighted the importance of applying standardized clinical protocols and ensuring timely assessment and management of suspected dengue patients. The training also provides healthcare professionals with an opportunity to refresh their knowledge and share experiences regarding dengue case management, particularly during the peak transmission season.—APP

EU weighs cost of open trade policy with China

EU concerns about the bloc's relationship, especially its trade deficit, with China are not new. However, a potential pivot point is approaching that may be the most important for bilateral relations since the 2008-09 global financial crisis or even Beijing's 2001 accession to the World Trade Organization. In a diverse region of 27 member states, marshalling consensus across the EU is rarely easy. However, senior politicians in national capitals and Brussels are increasingly aware that its economy may face an existential challenge without stronger action. This is what European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warns risks becoming a "new China shock."

In 2025, China's trade surplus with the EU hit 360.6 billion (\$411 billion), larger than with the US. Strikingly, that total is almost exactly 1 billion a day, an increase of 15 percent from 2024. It is increasingly clear that the managed competition of recent years is not enough and that a tougher trade policy is necessary. This appears to be the view of a growing number of senior European politicians, including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. This is important not only because France and Germany are the EU's largest economies but also because both have previously been among the strongest advocates of open European trade with China.

Macron has made Chinese trade and growing global imbalances a key plank of this year's G7. Moreover, a recent report by the French Commission for Planning argues that current EU trade defense tools are not fit for purpose to tackle Beijing's long-term industrial strategy. It also asserted that the distance between Chinese and European production costs is frequently "too wide to be closed quickly through innovation or productivity gains alone." Macron, Merz and a growing number of other leaders, therefore, appear increasingly adamant that the EU must do more to mitigate the risks, with Chinese firms dominating European supply in key sectors such as chemicals, critical minerals and industrial robots. Other European politicians even voice concerns about the need to preserve Europe's democratic model, via a strong industrial base, to help remain a key geopolitical actor.

It is increasingly clear that managed competition is not enough and that a tougher trade policy is necessary. At the time of writing, the EU is approaching the end of a lengthy consultation period with China ahead

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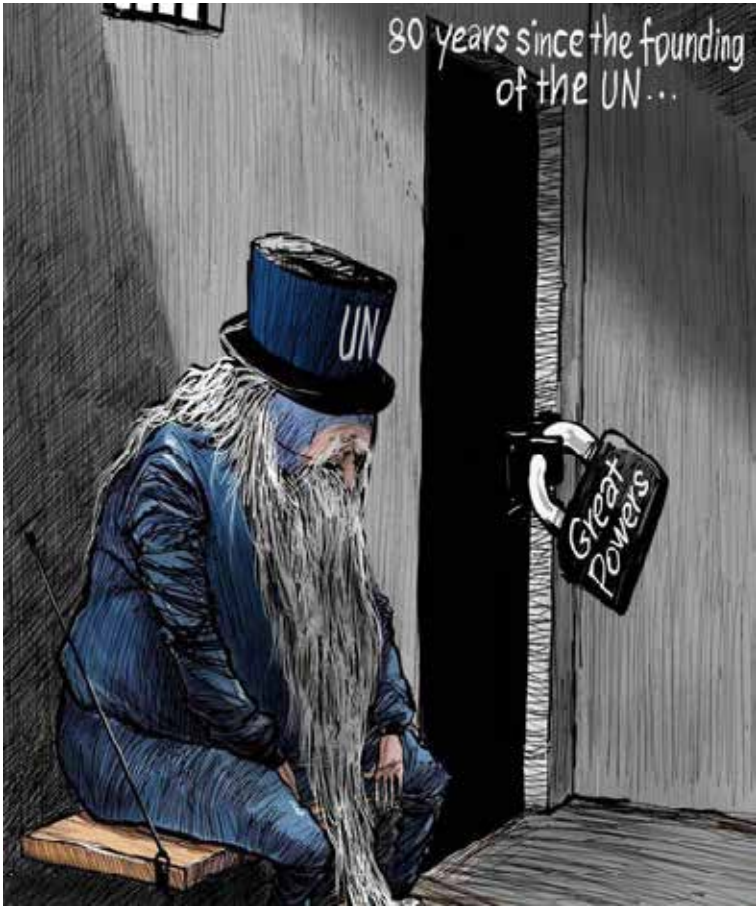
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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



of a deadline for action this month. European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maros Sefcovic and Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao identified four workstreams, including export controls and trade and investment balancing, and agreed to establish a joint trade monitoring mechanism "with a view to improving transparency, enhancing mutual trust and managing trade frictions." This consultation period has seen much diplomatic activity. However, the fundamental challenges are unlikely to be tackled meaningfully in the relatively tight timeframe, not least as the Chinese economic growth model remains reliant on exports rather than domestic demand. This core point is shown in the words of each power. Wang has called for the EU to promote "a rational and objective perception of China ... and the adoption of positive and correct policies toward China." Meanwhile, Sefcovic said that "China's exports to the EU keep rising, while our market share in China keeps shrinking ... The status quo is not an option." The view that little fundamental is likely to be agreed this month is shared by Bernd Lange, the straight-talking chair of the European Parliament's International Trade Committee. He has said that this timeframe is "not realistic at all" if Brussels wants to secure meaningful, binding concessions from China.

What is much more plausible this autumn is a broad framework deal on major issues. This might then be followed by the negotiation of a deeper, bespoke agreement with a clear legal text to underpin it in a bid to try to tackle these issues as harmoniously as possible and avoid deep-seated confrontation and a potential trade war. Yet, even if such a process were to be followed, the EU still needs a powerful hand of cards to force meaningful, sustainable concessions from China. The answer cannot be more face-saving, nonsubstantive measures. This is why the EU is considering ramping up its toolbox of trade tools beyond the new Industrial Accelerator Act, which would prioritize EU-made goods in public procurement – plus the Anti-Coercion Instrument, which has not yet been used, and is widely perceived as too unwieldy. The EU recently introduced a reduction in the duty-free quota for imported steel, and a 3 customs charge on small parcels. In 2025, almost 6 billion such parcels entered the EU, with the huge majority coming from China.

Other measures under consideration in Brussels include a mechanism to diversify supply chains and reduce vulnerable dependencies, plus another to build greater EU solidarity in the event of Chinese retaliation. Taken together, it is increasingly clear that EU-China trade ties are heading toward a potential pivot point. While that moment is unlikely to be realized in full this month, the bloc's appetite for face-saving, non-substantive measures may finally be coming to an end.

Flydubai, Iran and the Politics of Escalation

Qamar Bashir



The political danger, however, does not depend on proving fabrication. A genuine attack can be exploited to pursue objectives far beyond bringing its perpetrators to justice. Whether anyone organized the incident and how governments subsequently use it are separate questions. Both deserve scrutiny. The possibility of further escalation is already being discussed openly in American military commentary. According to the Fox News report, additional naval and Marine deployments would bring...

AN aviation emergency should produce an investigation before it produces threats of war. Yet the September 30 incident aboard Flydubai Flight FZ1073 has already entered the machinery of geopolitical accusation. Before investigators have publicly established the alleged attacker's motive or connections, Iran has been placed under suspicion and threatened with American retaliation. The passengers deserve justice and a complete account. The Middle East deserves protection from another escalation driven by assertions that move faster than evidence. President Donald Trump threatened to hit Iran "very hard" if investigators established its involvement. Associated Press reporting noted that he suggested a connection without publicly presenting supporting evidence. Such statements carry consequences beyond a press conference. They prepare audiences for retaliation and introduce an unresolved allegation into the political case for military action. That accusation also raises a question of strategic logic. Iran possesses substantial conventional and asymmetric means of retaliation. Why would it choose an operation against civilian passengers that could bring international condemnation, damage its diplomatic position and provide its adversaries with an additional justification for attack? These allegations demand a serious answer before speculation becomes accepted truth.

An attack on a civilian aircraft would be an indefensible atrocity, whoever organized it. Washington must establish responsibility through evidence rather than invoke Iran's name as though suspicion settles the matter. The danger is that the distinction between "if Iran was involved" and "Iran was involved" will disappear through repetition. A conditional presidential accusation can become a headline, the headline a political assumption, and the assumption an argument for bombardment. Civilian lives must never become ammunition in a campaign to expand a war. The controversy arrives amid mounting demands for accountability over the warnings preceding October 7, 2023. Haaretz reported that UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed warned Netanyahu approximately ten days before the attack that Hamas was preparing a major operation. Separately, reporting summarized by The Times of Israel alleged that Israeli intelligence officials and Egypt had repeatedly warned him that Qatari funds were strengthening Hamas's military wing. Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, challenged attempts to assign responsibility to Doha, maintaining that its \$30 million monthly assistance program operated through arrangements coordinated with Israel, the United States and the United Nations, with recipients vetted by Israeli security agencies. He accused Netanyahu of deflecting scrutiny of his government's conduct while explicitly condemn-

ing the October 7 massacre. These competing accounts demand an independent inquiry with access to intelligence assessments, diplomatic communications and decision-making records. What warnings reached Netanyahu? What action followed? Were the consequences of existing policies knowingly disregarded? Against this background, the Flydubai incident has generated competing explanations and widespread distrust. Some commentators question individual details. Others allege staging, intelligence involvement or a manufactured pretext for escalation. A renowned American podcaster Mike Dean argued that the footage of publicly circulated footage identifying the suspect, and changing descriptions of the weapon. His conclusion was that the public narrative did not adequately explain what happened. Another, credible podcaster advanced an explicit false-flag theory. He connected Netanyahu's reported September 27 visit to Abu Dhabi with the aviation incident three days later, suggesting an operation intended to blame Muslims, implicate Iran and justify military escalation. The speaker interpreted differing descriptions of cockpit access and the presence of additional pilots as signs of a constructed account. A separate geopolitical commentator proposed that the aircraft's descent and diversion toward Tabuk could have served an intelligence purpose: exposing limitations in Saudi radar coverage and revealing defensive reaction times. The speaker speculated that the information might facilitate a later attack on Saudi infrastructure, potentially using a weapon resembling an Iranian drone to direct blame toward Tehran. Another geopolitical analyst described claims of Israeli and Mossad orchestration intended to manufacture a pretext for war. The political danger, however, does not depend on proving fabrication. A genuine attack can be exploited to pursue objectives far beyond bringing its perpetrators to justice. Whether anyone organized the incident and how governments subsequently use it are separate questions. Both deserve scrutiny. The possibility of further escalation is already being discussed openly in American military commentary. According to the Fox News report, additional naval and Marine deployments would bring approximately 10,000 additional personnel to the Middle East, with arrival expected by the end of November. Retired General Jack Keane described renewed joint American-Israeli combat as an option available to Trump, envisaging a shorter but substantially more destructive campaign capable of placing Iran's government on a path toward collapse. Keane also

explicitly speculated that the CIA and Mossad were working to weaken the Iranian leadership, encourage internal fractures and assist resistance. Those remarks were not an announcement of an approved operation. They nevertheless reveal the scale of military action and political transformation being advocated in influential American commentary. My prediction is that the approach of elections will sharpen pressure for a dramatic demonstration of military power. The Flydubai incident could become part of that argument, alongside other security allegations. The pursuit of an alleged attacker could then be absorbed into a much broader campaign against Iran's leadership, military capabilities and infrastructure. A weaker and fractured Iran and fractured and downgraded and weakened middle east on several fronts could create opportunities for advocates of Israeli predominance. Netanyahu's expressed attachment to a "Greater Israel" vision has already drawn condemnation from Arab governments. Those statements justify scrutiny of expansionist ambitions. Military dominance and territorial expansion are distinct objectives, but weakened neighboring states could find themselves less able to resist coercion. The strategic danger is that American force weakens Iran, Iranian retaliation destabilizes neighboring countries, and the resulting imbalance creates conditions that proponents of Israeli hegemony seek to exploit. This is the regional consequence I fear—not a demonstrated explanation of who organized the Flydubai attack. A catastrophe can serve an expansionist agenda with every event leading to it having been secretly planned. That distinction strengthens the warning. There is no need to prove an elaborate conspiracy to demand that governments stop turning unfinished investigations into arguments for war. The responsibility lies with those proposing military action to establish the facts, explain their objectives and account for the consequences. Investigate the attack completely. Identify and prosecute those responsible through lawful processes. Protect the passengers' right to truth. But refuse the leap from suspicion to collective punishment. If this emergency becomes a justification for devastating Iran and destabilizing its neighbors, it could bring the ambitions associated with "Greater Israel" closer to realization. The time to challenge that course is before accusation becomes authorization, before retaliation becomes regional destruction, and before another generation is left to live among the ruins.

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

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq: Parliament's Bridge Across the Political Divide

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The broader stakes are considerable. Pakistan faces economic pressures, security concerns, social divisions and a complicated regional environment. These challenges cannot be addressed if political energy remains consumed by confrontation. Economic policy requires continuity, foreign policy benefits from national coherence, security demands institutional...

IN Pakistan's turbulent political landscape, Parliament remains the one institution where disagreement can be converted into dialogue and confrontation into compromise. It is the forum where competing political visions meet, debate and seek common ground. In such circumstances, the Speaker's office assumes importance beyond routine parliamentary proceedings. The Speaker must protect the dignity of the House, ensure space for treasury and opposition benches and preserve channels for dialogue when tensions rise. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has once again assumed this demanding institutional responsibility. On October 2, 2026, representatives of the government, Pakistan Peoples Party and opposition held their first formal round of talks at Parliament House under his chairmanship. The participants presented their respective positions and agreed to continue discussions the following day. The National Assembly Secretariat described the meeting as constructive and cordial, stressing the importance of addressing national issues through dialogue. The importance of the initiative lies also in the fact that rival political forces have again sat across the parliamentary table. At a time of hardened differences and confrontation, restoring communication is itself an institutional achievement. The second round began on October 3 under Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's chairmanship, with the political sides continuing to exchange views. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's political career has been closely associated with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, yet his responsibilities as Speaker have repeatedly required him to rise above partisan boundaries. National Assembly records show that he has served as Speaker during three periods: 2013-15, 2015-18 and, since March 2024, the present term. His parliamentary experience, procedural familiarity and measured demeanour have helped him command respect across the political divide. His earlier tenure exposed him to intense political pressures. During the PTI resignation episode, questions concerning the status and procedure of members' res-

ignations came before the Speaker. Such episodes show that the Speaker's responsibilities demand constitutional understanding, political sensitivity, procedural discipline and restraint. Political parties may disagree profoundly over policies, personalities, institutions and the direction of governance, yet parliamentary democracy cannot function indefinitely on the assumption that every dispute must culminate in confrontation. The constitutional framework presupposes that differences will be managed through institutions, debate, consultation and engagement. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has repeatedly emphasised Parliament as the appropriate forum for resolving political questions. A Speaker can facilitate dialogue without becoming partisan in the substance of negotiations. The present talks illustrate this distinction. Neither side initially abandoned its stance, yet both agreed to continue talking. Mediation often begins here; not with settlement, but by keeping communication open. Effective mediation requires patience, listening and understanding competing concerns while creating confidence for adversaries to remain at the table. Ayaz Sadiq's long parliamentary experience gives him familiarity with the temperaments, procedures and sensitivities of Pakistan's political class. His office provides a setting where leaders can articulate grievances, defend positions and explore accommodation without surrendering political identities. The broader stakes are considerable. Pakistan faces economic pressures, security concerns, social divisions and a complicated regional environment. These challenges cannot be addressed if political energy remains consumed by confrontation. Economic policy requires continuity, foreign policy benefits from national coherence, security demands institutional cooperation, and democratic institutions depend upon public confidence. They do not require agreement on everything; they require recognition that national interest is greater than individual disputes or partisan advantage. Against this background, the idea of a Parliamentary Reconciliation Committee, comprising representatives

of major political parties and guided by the Speaker, deserves serious consideration. Such a mechanism could provide a forum for political grievances, economic questions and national matters away from daily rhetoric. Its purpose should not be to eliminate differences, but to ensure they are managed through dialogue. Parliament is strongest not when every member speaks with one voice, but when different voices can be heard without damaging the institution that accommodates them. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's current effort to bring government and opposition representatives together is therefore larger than the immediate negotiations taking place under his chairmanship. It represents an attempt to reaffirm Parliament's role as a place where political competition can coexist with institutional responsibility. The two-day reconciliation initiative did not produce the breakthrough many had hoped for. Yet it achieved something important: it helped break the deadlock and brought government and opposition representatives to the same table. In an atmosphere marked by mistrust, creating room for dialogue is itself a significant parliamentary accomplishment. The Speaker has demonstrated resolve, political maturity and commitment to keeping communication open. It is now hoped that he will carry this process forward with patience and consistency. Reconciliation will depend upon the willingness of all sides to listen, compromise and distinguish political contest from national interest. The Speaker cannot impose agreement; he can protect the environment in which agreement becomes possible. Dialogue can restore trust, ease tensions and reduce political paralysis. Every durable settlement begins with conversation, and every meaningful conversation requires a place where adversaries can meet. By bringing opposing political forces back to the same table, the Speaker has reaffirmed an enduring principle of parliamentary democracy; differences may be deep, positions may remain firm, but the door to dialogue must never be closed. Parliament must remain the bridge, and the Speaker its custodian.

Briefs

Tarar tears into PTI over terrorism, KP governance

FROM PAGE 01

The minister alleged that PTI's public narrative on terrorism was inconsistent with its claims of taking action against militancy. He accused the KP government of pursuing policies that, according to him, have contributed to the spread of terrorism in the province. Raising a series of questions about the provincial government's security policies, Tarar asked why the KP administration does not regularly attend federal Apex Committee meetings or hold its own provincial security review sessions. He also questioned the government's stance on cross-border attacks and militant activities linked to Afghanistan, alleging that the provincial leadership has failed to clearly condemn such incidents. Tarar further criticised the KP government for what he described as inadequate support for security forces and police personnel engaged in counterterrorism operations. He questioned whether the provincial leadership had sufficiently recognized the sacrifices made by law enforcement agencies and the armed forces in the fight against militancy. The federal minister also accused the KP government of failing to fully implement the National Action Plan (NAP), particularly measures relating to illegal spectrum usage, undocumented Afghan immigrants, and capacity building of police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel.

PM, Nawaz review political situation

FROM PAGE 01

that any meaningful dialogue should include a meeting with jailed former prime minister Imran Khan. However, the government maintained that facilitating such a meeting was not within its purview, leading to a deadlock in the negotiation process. Political observers believe the collapse of the previous round of talks has further widened the gap between the government and the opposition, reducing the prospects for consensus on key political and electoral issues in the near term. During the Lahore meeting, the Sharif brothers also discussed strategies for addressing political challenges and ensuring stability amid evolving domestic and international developments. The participants reviewed governance matters and the performance of the federal and provincial administrations. The meeting is being seen as part of ongoing consultations within the ruling party's leadership aimed at strengthening political coordination and formulating responses to emerging challenges. Analysts say the discussions reflect the government's focus on maintaining political stability while navigating a complex political environment marked by persistent tensions with the opposition.

Naqvi accuses KP CM Afridi...

FROM PAGE 01

"The agreement had been prepared," Naqvi said, adding that he took a copy of the agreement to President Zardari. The interior minister said that after showing the agreement to the president and returning, he learnt that several changes had been made to the draft by the KP chief minister. "Unfortunately, the KP chief minister tried to sabotage the negotiations," Naqvi added. Naqvi said that four drafts were prepared and amended during yesterday's negotiations, with participants examining the details of the proposed agreement. He said that the government had made it clear to the opposition delegation that the issue was not political but concerned terrorism. The interior minister said he had requested that the KP government be made a mandatory participant in the negotiations, adding that if CM Afridi had to make the decisions, he should have attended the talks himself.

FAO, Partners kick off preparation of Marine Biodiversity Project

FAO's team included Ms. Emmah Kamau, Head of Operations; Dr. Kanwar Muhammad Javed Iqbal, Senior Technical Specialist and National Coordinator; and Mr. Naveed Babar, Operations Focal Person, with international FAO and GEF experts joining virtually.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs (MoMA) and Marine Fisheries Department (MFD), has initiated preparations for a GEF-supported project aimed at strengthening marine biodiversity conservation in Pakistan. A project kick-off meeting was held at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC), chaired by Mr. Mahmood Hassan, Additional Secretary-II and GEF Operational Focal Point for Pakistan. The meeting reviewed the activities, timeline and implementation arrangements for the GEF Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase of the Marine Biodiversity Pakistan Project. FAO, MoMA, MFD and MoCC&EC officials discussed key project components, institutional arrangements, including the proposed Project Management Unit, and mechanisms for the allocation and utilization of project funds. The meeting also considered the establishment of a Technical Advisory Group to support the PPG process. The project seeks to strengthen collaboration among relevant government institutions and partners to support the sustainable management and conservation of Pakistan's marine biodiversity and associated fisheries resources. FAO's team included Ms. Emmah Kamau,



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Head of Operations; Dr. Kanwar Muhammad Javed Iqbal, Senior Technical Specialist and National Coordinator; and Mr. Naveed Babar, Operations Focal Person, with international FAO and GEF experts joining virtually. Representing MoMA/MFD were Dr. Mansoor Ali Wassan, Director General, Marine Fisheries Department;

Dr. Hafeez ur Rehman, Fisheries Development Commissioner and Mr. Muhammad Farhan Khan, Assistant Fisheries Development Commissioner. The kick-off marks an important step towards advancing the project preparation process and strengthening coordinated action for marine biodiversity conservation in Pakistan.

Kazakhstan records 84-medal haul

ASTANA: The 20th Summer Asian Games have concluded in Japan, with Kazakhstan winning 84 medals - 12 gold, 24 silver and 48 bronze - to finish eighth in the overall medal standings among 46 participating countries, Qazinform News Agency reports, citing the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. Kazakhstan records 84-medal haul and historic achievements at Asian Games. At the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, Kazakhstan finished 11th. The latest result represents a three-place improvement, along with an increase in the number of gold medals. The team also achieved several historic results in Olympic disciplines. One of the highlights was Kazakhstan's return to the top of the Asian Games boxing podium after a 12-year break. The country last won boxing gold at the Asian

Games in 2014, while no gold medals were secured at the following two editions. In Japan, Torekhan Sabyrkhan won the men's 70kg title, while national team captain Aibek Oralbay triumphed in the over 90kg category. Historic gold for Kazakhstani fencers Kazakhstan's men's épée team won the country's first-ever Asian Games gold in fencing. In the final, the Kazakhstani team defeated South Korea 43-42. The Korean lineup included Park Sang-young, the Rio 2016 Olympic champion in individual épée. The victory capped a historic season for the Kazakhstani team, which also won the Asian Championships and became world champions for the first time before claiming Asian Games gold. No team had previously achieved all three titles in a single season. Vladislav

Yakovlev and Ivan Chernukhin won Kazakhstan's first-ever Asian Games gold in rowing, triumphing in the men's pair coxless event. Tamirlan Tleules also made history by winning Kazakhstan's first Asian Games gold in taekwondo, taking the men's 58kg title. Cyclist Alexey Lutsenko further strengthened his record by taking his sixth Asian Games gold medal, becoming Kazakhstan's most decorated athlete in terms of Asian Games victories. Rinata Sultanova became the first Kazakhstani woman to win Asian Games gold in the individual cycling time trial. Kazakhstan also claimed two karate gold medals through Zholaman Bigabyl and Sofya Berultseva. For Berultseva, it was her second Asian Games title. In the Asian Games' inaugural mixed martial arts

tournament, Kazakhstan immediately emerged among the leading nations, with Yerkingali Burkutalin and Kadyrbek Shynbayev winning gold, while Sanzhar Adilov took bronze. Strong performance in judo Kazakhstan's judo team reached four individual finals for the first time at the Asian Games. Yeldos Smetov, Abiba Abuzhakynova, Adilet Almat and Azhar Askhat won silver medals, all losing their finals to Japanese opponents. Kazakhstan added another silver in the mixed team event. In all five judo finals involving Kazakhstan athletes, the opponents were representatives of Japan. In artistic gymnastics, Midlad Karimi won silver in the floor exercise, bringing Kazakhstan back onto the Asian Games podium in the discipline for the first time in 32 years. - APP

Asian Games 2026: Pakistan Defeats Korea 5-3 to Secure Hockey Bronze Medal

DNA

KAWASAKI: Pakistan's men's hockey team clinched the bronze medal at the Asian Games with a thrilling 5-3 victory over Korea at the Kawasaki Juko Stadium. In a high-scoring encounter, Pakistan mounted an impressive second-half surge, scoring three goals in the fourth quarter to break a 2-2 tie and secure a spot on the podium. Match Highlights: Early Advantage Korea: Korea took an early lead in the first quarter when Lee Gangsan scored in the 12th minute (11:53). Pakistan Strikes Back: Pakistan responded before the break, equalizing through Abdul Rehman in the 30th minute (29:47) to level the score 1-1 at half-time. Tight Third Quarter: Korea surged ahead again with a goal from Park Cheoloon (35:26), but Pakistan quickly countered with Ghazanfar Ali finding the back of the net in the 45th minute (44:07) to make it 2-2. Fourth Quarter Dominance: Waheed Ashraf Rana delivered a decisive performance in the final period, scoring twice in quick succession (51:52 and 53:23) to propel Pakistan into a 4-2 lead. Hannan Shahid added a late seal with a goal in the 59th minute (58:32) to secure the 5-3 victory.

Pacer Kainat Imtiaz announces retirement from int'l cricket

LAHORE: Fast bowler Kainat Imtiaz on Sunday announced her retirement from international cricket after representing the Pakistan women's team in 19 One-Day Internationals and 21 T20 Internationals across a 13-year career. According to a spokesperson, Kainat, who recently stepped into officiating as a match referee during the PCB National Women's U19 T20 Tournament in August and September, made her international debuts as Pakistan T20I cap No. 22 against South Africa in Potchefstroom in October 2010, and ODI cap No. 64 against Ireland in Fatullah, Bangladesh. The right-arm pacer featured in four matches during the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2017 and was a key member of the national squads that clinched Gold Medals at the Asian Games in 2010 (China) and 2014 (South Korea). She was also part of Pakistan's squad at the 2022 Commonwealth Games. She played her final ODI against Australia at the Gabba in January 2023, while her last T20I appearance was against Thailand at Sylhet in October 2022. Kainat began her cricketing journey in February 2007 representing the Karachi Schools U17 team before making her domestic List A and T20 debuts in 2008. Her mother, Saleema Imtiaz, holds the distinction of becoming Pakistan's first woman umpire on the ICC International Development Panel in 2024, having officiated nine WODIs and 69 WT20Is to date. - APP

Turkish President inaugurates new interchange

SANLIURFA: President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan has inaugurated a new interchange on Azerbaijan Boulevard as part of his visit to Sanliurfa for the TE-KNOFEST Southeast festival. The opening ceremony was attended by Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of Türkiye Abdulkadir Uraloglu and Azerbaijani Ambassador to Türkiye Rashad Aslanov. The new overpass interchange will significantly ease the burden on the city's transport network and reduce travel time between the city center and GAP Airport. Azerbaijan Boulevard provides access to Sanliurfa's new 2,000-bed city hospital. - APP

Uzbekistan maps out development of 30 new tourist zones by 2030

One key issue was the plan to develop 30 new tourism areas by 2030, based on comprehensive master plans

ASTANA: Uzbekistan plans to develop 30 new tourist areas by 2030 under comprehensive master plans, the country's Tourism Committee said following a meeting with representatives of UK-based engineering and consulting company Arup, Qazinform News Agency cites Uza. Abdulaziz Akkulov, Chairman of the Tourism Committee, met with Ilkay Çorğundag, Arup's director, to discuss the development of promising tourism destinations and the creation of modern infrastructure. The talks focused on sustainable tourism development, the integrated planning of areas with high tourism potential and the

expansion of tourism infrastructure. One key issue was the plan to develop 30 new tourism areas by 2030, based on comprehensive master plans. Under the proposed master plans, transport networks, urban planning, hotel facilities, recreational areas and other essential infrastructure will be developed in a coordinated manner. To advance these efforts, the Project Office for Tourism Infrastructure Development was established under the Tourism Committee in April this year, pursuant to a presidential resolution. The institution is expected to support the wider application of international expertise in tourism infrastructure projects. The sides also discussed Arup's potential involvement in developing promising tourism destinations across Uzbekistan. Company representatives expressed interest in opening a representative office in Tashkent. - DNA

Wild Neighbours, busy trails: The monkey encounters changing Islamabad's hiking scene

MONIBA IFTIKHAR

ISLAMABAD: The afternoon was calm on the Margalla Hills. A group of hikers had stopped along the trail to catch their breath, enjoy the cool breeze and admire Islamabad stretching beneath them. From the height of the hills, the capital appeared peaceful and distant, its busy roads and buildings softened by the surrounding green landscape. Then the mood suddenly changed. A monkey emerged from the trees and moved towards the hikers, its eyes fixed on a packet of biscuits. Within seconds, the quiet break turned into laughter, nervous shouts and hurried steps backwards. The hikers pulled their bags closer as the monkey continued its approach without the slightest hesitation. "Be careful with the biscuits!" one hiker shouted. The monkey remained completely unfazed. It had spotted the food and appeared to know exactly what it wanted. "These monkeys know exactly who is carrying food," another hiker joked. For the hikers, it was an amusing encounter. But for wildlife enthusiasts and officials, scenes like this point to a deeper and increasingly visible problem: wild animals

are becoming accustomed to human food. Across Daman-e-Koh, Trail 3, Trail 5 and other routes through the Margalla Hills, hikers, families, students and fitness enthusiasts regularly share the trails with wildlife. They come for exercise, fresh air, scenic views and a break from the routine of city life. Yet the boundary between observing wildlife and interfering with it can disappear quickly when visitors begin offering food. "We come here for the views and the peace, but the monkeys have become part of the experience too," said regular hiker Khalid Malik. Another hiker summed up the experience with a laugh: "You can forget your water bottle, but never forget to protect your snacks." Behind the humour is a serious conservation concern. Mansoor Sherwani, a young nature enthusiast and biodiversity advocate who volunteers with the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) has made public awareness about wildlife feeding an important part of his work. He regularly approaches visitors on the trails, asking them not to feed monkeys or other wild animals. For Mansoor, the issue is not about a single biscuit, sandwich or piece of fruit. It is about what repeated feeding teaches an animal. "Wild animals know how to find food in their own habitat," he explained. "When people keep feeding them, they begin to

expect food from humans instead of finding it themselves." He believes visitors often feed wildlife with good intentions. A person sees a monkey approaching and assumes that giving it a piece of bread, fruit or a paratha is an act of kindness. But, he argues, kindness can have unintended consequences. "When wild animals repeatedly receive food from humans, they begin to associate people with an easy source of food," Mansoor said. "Instead of maintaining their natural distance, they learn to approach visitors." One encounter particularly stayed with him. A family had arrived on the trail carrying freshly prepared desi ghee parathas. The food had not simply been packed for their own picnic. They had brought the parathas from their village specifically to feed the monkeys. Several monkeys watched from nearby branches as the family prepared to offer them the food. Mansoor approached the family and explained why feeding wildlife could interfere with the animals' natural behaviour. Then, hoping humour would make his message easier to remember, he joked: "Why don't you give those parathas to me instead? I hardly ever get to eat desi ghee parathas like these." The family laughed, but their intention remained serious. They told him that they had brought the special

food from their village specifically for the monkeys. For Mansoor, the encounter revealed how deeply the practice is rooted in public perception. "Many people genuinely believe they are helping animals when they feed them," he said. "But wildlife does not need to be taught to depend on people." Another incident provided an even more direct demonstration. At Daman-e-Koh, Mansoor encountered a group of female students running along the road. He asked whether they were carrying food. They said they were not. He nevertheless warned them to remain cautious around the monkeys and not to encourage them to approach. Within minutes, his warning became reality. A monkey suddenly approached, grabbed one of the girls' bags and began eating the sandwiches inside. What had initially seemed like a harmless wildlife encounter quickly became a scramble as the students watched the animal help itself to their food. Mansoor said the incident showed how easily monkeys can become comfortable around humans when they associate visitors with food. On another occasion, he found a family eating along the trail while monkeys gathered nearby. Instead of allowing the family to feed them, he advised them to show the animals their empty hands.

US carrier George H W Bush visits Thailand

FROM PAGE 01

the Middle East. The Nimitz-class carrier had been operating in the Arabian Sea during the conflict with Iran, according to multiple media reports. The carrier will anchor offshore, while crew members are expected to come ashore through Phuket Deep Sea Port and spend time on the popular southern resort island from October 4 to 9, local media reported.

Yemen president announces attacks...

FROM PAGE 01

He called on residents in militia-controlled areas to stay away from Houthi gathering places and to protect their children from being drawn into the fighting. "The military operations we are about to launch are not a war against our people in Sana'a, Hodeidah, and Sa'ada," Al-Alimi said. "They are not a war against any sect or tribe." He said every city reclaimed by the state would enter a phase of stability, recovery and reconstruction, adding that the success of the battle would be measured by the number of citizens who had regained a sense of security. Al-Alimi also called on Yemen's "brothers and friends in the international community" to stand by the country.

PTI begins Islamabad long march

FROM PAGE 01

the deadlock. KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi set off from Lakki Marwat's Gandi Chowk, saying he would announce his next course of action on Thursday, October 8, when the party's convoy reaches Khairabad. PTI and a delegation from the government and PPP held three rounds of talks but on Sunday morning, they finally broke down, with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi clarifying that "talks have collapsed" and that the KP CM was behind their sabotage. Meanwhile, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja claimed that the primary reason for the failure of overnight talks was the federal government's insistence that all anti-terrorism actions it unilaterally initiated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa must be owned by the provincial government.

IRGC adviser says missile...

FROM PAGE 01

United States, with talks on ending the war apparently at an impasse. "If our enemies again choose the path of military confrontation, our response will be stronger than before, and we will defend ourselves with even more force," Araghchi said at a gathering of foreign ambassadors. "There is no military solution, nor any solution based on new sanctions." Meanwhile, Iran's top leadership has not discussed the return of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to the country, Al Jazeera reports citing foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei. The US proposal on ending the war is similar to previous ones, focusing on Iran's nuclear file, whereas Tehran wants to first address the opening of the Strait of Hormuz, Baqaei said.

Pak, Russia to discuss...

FROM PAGE 01

regional platform for discussions on the situation in Afghanistan, bringing together representatives from regional countries to exchange views on political, security and economic developments in the country. Diplomatic sources said the meeting is expected to focus on issues related to regional stability, counterterrorism cooperation, humanitarian challenges and efforts to promote lasting peace in Afghanistan. Participants are also likely to discuss ways to enhance regional engagement and support initiatives aimed at ensuring security and economic development in the war-torn country.

Briefs

Britain scraps heavily criticized

LONDON: Britain will scrap plans to remove the historic right to trial by jury for defendants in less serious criminal cases, the government announced on Sunday, in response to sustained criticism of the proposals by many lawyers and politicians.

The decision by Andy Burnham, who became prime minister in July, to drop his predecessor Keir Starmer's policy comes as hundreds of prisoners were released early to stop prisons becoming full, in just one element of a criminal justice crisis.

Plans to curb jury trials for cases where a jail sentence was likely to be less than three years would be abandoned, the Ministry of Justice said, which was broadly welcomed by the Criminal Bar Association and other groups.

But lawyers raised concerns over the MoJ's decision to increase sentencing powers for magistrates – who hear trials for more minor offenses without a jury – and the removal of defendants' right to elect trial by jury.

"I have heard the strength of feeling on the proposals for increasing the number of judge-alone trials in the Crown Court and have made the decision to change course," Justice Secretary Alex Norris said.

CBA chair Andrew Thomas thanked the government for "listening to the evidence and reaching the right verdict," though he said "a severe threat to our trial by jury remains."

The Bar Council's chair Kirsty Brimelow agreed, saying that giving magistrates greater powers when the backlog in magistrates' courts is increasing could be counterproductive.

The current backlog of cases awaiting trial by jury in Crown Courts in England and Wales was nearly 81,000 at the end of June, almost double the figure in 2020, and victims, defendants and witnesses often wait years for cases to come to trial.

Starmer's justice minister David Lammy last year said reducing jury trials would speed up justice, but met a furious backlash from lawyers who said it curtailed the fundamental right of defendants to be tried by a jury of their peers.

Critics also argued that years of neglect and under-investment by successive governments, rather than jury trials, were the root cause of delays, while the head of England's judiciary raised "grave security concerns" for judges.—APP

GCC tops global remittance outflows at \$161b

RIYADH: Gulf Cooperation Council countries recorded the highest value of outward workers' remittances globally in 2025, with transfers reaching about \$161 billion, official data showed.

The figure rose 13.6 percent from 2024, marking a second consecutive year of growth after remittance outflows declined in 2023, according to GCC-Stat data cited by the UAE's state news agency, WAM.

The GCC's remittance flows have increased alongside the region's economic expansion and continued reliance on expatriate workers. The bloc's population reached 63.3 million in 2025, while non-oil activities accounted for 70.6 percent of combined gross domestic product and grew 5.1 percent during the year.

The increase comes as Gulf economies continue to attract expatriate labor to support infrastructure, services, industry and other non-oil sectors. The shift toward more diversified economies has also increased demand for workers across a broader range of industries.

The International Monetary Fund said economies with larger non-hydrocarbon sectors, including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, were better positioned to cushion the impact of recent disruptions, although weaker trade and business confidence have constrained activity.

"The data highlighted the exceptional global standing of the GCC countries when comparing their total outgoing remittances with the remittance values recorded in a number of major economies individually," the WAM report stated.—APP

Islamabad needs empowered local govt: Tahir

He said a strong and effective local government system was essential for sustainable urban development, but Islamabad had been without a functioning elected local government for more than four years

DNA

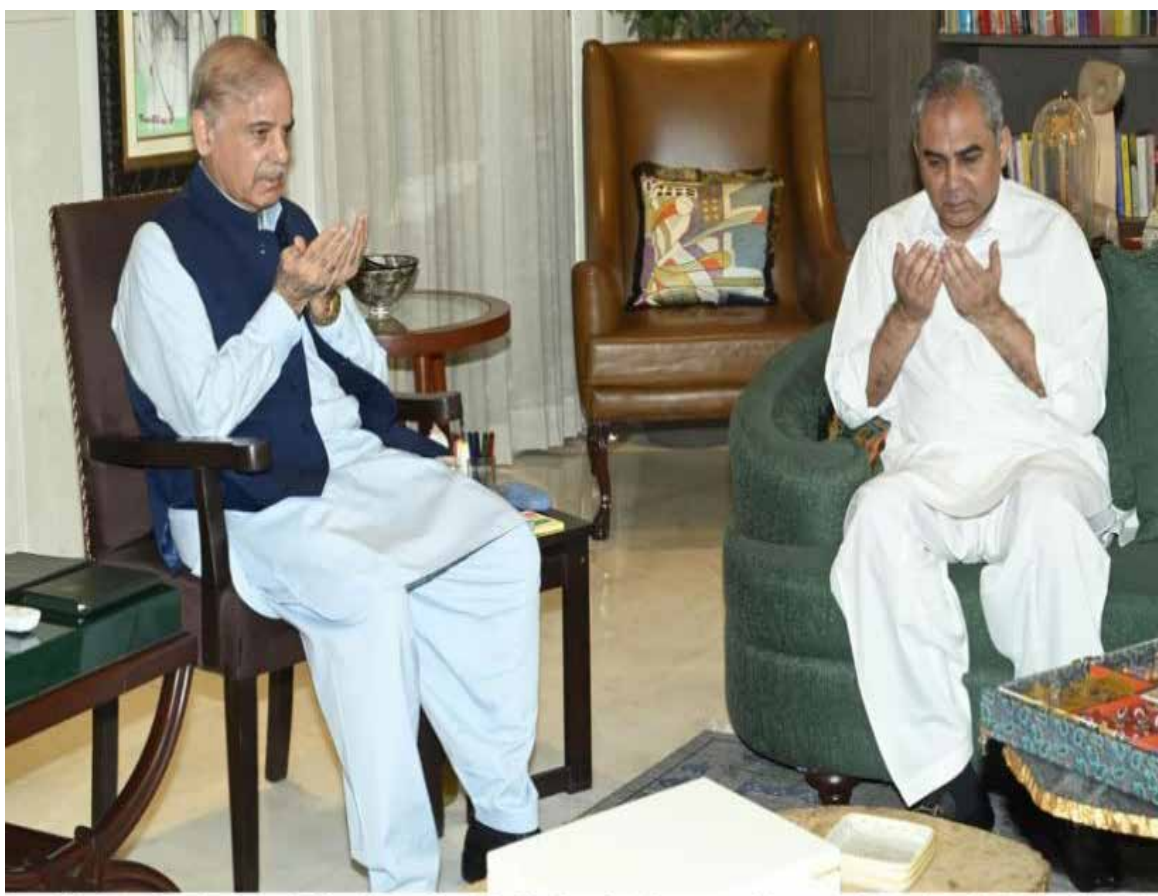
ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), President of the Federation of Realtors Pakistan and Member of the Prime Minister's Task Force on Housing, Sardar Tahir Mahmood, has called for a new governance structure for Islamabad that is financially autonomous, administratively empowered and account-

able to the people.

He said a strong and effective local government system was essential for sustainable urban development, but Islamabad had been without a functioning elected local government for more than four years. The prolonged absence of a mayor and elected local representatives, he added, was a clear indication of weaknesses in the existing governance structure. Sardar Tahir Mahmood said Islamabad, with a population of more

than 2.4 million and rapidly expanding business, industrial, IT and educational sectors, could no longer be managed through an outdated administrative framework. He said citizens often remained confused about which institution was responsible for providing basic municipal services, as powers were distributed among various authorities while accountability remained unclear. He stressed that citizens should have a meaningful role in determining the sys-

tem under which their city is governed. All relevant stakeholders, he said, must be involved in decision-making to bridge the gap between public expectations and government policymaking. Sardar Tahir Mahmood further called for a governance model that clearly defines institutional responsibilities, ensures financial and administrative autonomy, and establishes an effective mechanism of accountability so that Islamabad can meet the needs of its rapidly growing population.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offering fateha at residence of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi over his maternal uncle's demise.

N Korea's Kim oversaw launch of missile that uses AI

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the launch of a missile with his daughter, state media reported on Sunday, which allegedly used artificial intelligence to adjust its trajectory. The AI technology means the missile is "capable of changing its flight orbit at a low altitude," Kim's powerful sister had said, adding this meant there was "no way to avoid" the attack. It launched from an area around the eastern coastal city of Wonsan early Saturday morning and flew more than 700 kilometers (435 miles), South Korea's military said, without giving further details. "Through today's launching drill, the strategic missile soldiers have fully demonstrated their professional qualifications and counterattack posture," Kim said after overseeing the launch, according to an English-language dispatch by the official Korean Central News Agency. "We must continue our responsible efforts nonstop to constantly and repeatedly make the enemy recognize the reliability and fatality of our strategic offensive means," he added. Photos released by KCNA showed a missile soaring into the sky in a burst of orange flame. Another photo showed Kim smiling, flanked by his daughter Ju Ae and wife Ri Sol Ju, who is seen clapping her hands in celebration. Ju Ae, who was first introduced to the public in 2022, is the most likely successor to her father according to South Korea's spy agency, citing her increasingly prominent role at major state and military events. The launch was conducted to help train soldiers operating the "hypersonic strategic weapon system," KCNA reported. It came days after Seoul's military demanded an apology from Pyongyang for a blast that wounded three South Korean soldiers in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which it blamed on the North.—APP

Germany's Merz arrives in Kyiv to finalize drone deal

KYIV: Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz arrived in Kyiv on Sunday, accompanied by CEOs from German defence companies, in a show of support for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy amid escalating Russian attacks on Ukrainian cities. Merz will announce a package of measures that includes the release of 1 billion in military aid and 350 million for repairs in the energy sector, German government officials said. The visit is also expected to finalize a deal for joint production of various kinds of drones. "I travelled to Kyiv today because Ukraine needs all our support in the coming weeks," Merz said, saying that Russian forces were bombing towns, residential buildings and heating plants. "If Russia is not stopped, sooner or later its war machine will turn against us." "I will tell President Zelenskyy today: 'You can continue to count on our help,'" Merz added. The German chancellor is accompanied by Minister for Economic Affairs Katharina Reiche and an economic delegation including executives from Siemens Energy, Hensoldt, Diehl Defence, Quantum Systems and other firms. Merz is also expected to press the Ukrainian government for progress on reforms requested by EU partners, including in the fight against corruption. Zelenskyy said on Wednesday, after speaking to Merz by phone, that Ukraine would soon finalise the deal with Germany for the production of drones, missiles and related software. A key focus is expected to be the rapid production of anti-jet drones, which Quantum, a German defence-technology company, has successfully tested. Since the summer, Russia has used dozens of high-speed jet attack drones daily to target civilian and military infrastructure. In April, Quantum and Ukrainian manufacturer WIY Drones announced the creation of Quantum WIY Industries, a joint venture to produce the Strla interceptor drone and related air-defence technologies. The deal also involves the joint development and production of weapons with a range of more than 1,000 km (600 miles) that Ukraine can use to launch attacks deep inside Russia. Government officials said the increased cooperation would allow money and technology to flow back to the Federal Republic, where weapons are produced and defences against drones targeting critical infrastructure can be strengthened. On Thursday, Merz said Germany would not be intimidated by the rising number of hybrid attacks by Russia on European states. Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday that Moscow would continue to systematically hit targets in Ukraine in what it said were retaliatory strikes for Ukrainian attacks on Russia in recent months. It warned foreign nationals and diplomatic staff against staying in or travelling to Ukraine.—APP

Lebanon's 2027 draft budget targeting revenue surge

BEIRUT: Lebanon's 2027 budget is asking a shrinking economy to deliver tax revenue more than double what it collected in 2024 – a target one economist calls unrealistic – while the country has yet to resolve how the losses from its banking crisis will be shared.

The Ministry of Finance has submitted a draft 2027 budget of \$6.87 billion, up 14.2 percent from 2026, with taxes supplying 85.9 percent of revenue. The budget assumes revenue will keep climbing while the economy shrinks. The World Bank's August Lebanon Economic Monitor projects a 6.4 percent contraction in 2026, after growth of 4.2 percent in 2025 To hit its revenue target, the government would need to collect 100.9 percent more than the \$3.41 billion raised in 2024 – a gap economist Jassem Ajaka told Arab News was "highly unrealistic." Capital spending is limited to \$745 million, or 10.8 percent of total expenditure, according to the draft law reviewed by Arab News, while wages, salaries and social benefits absorb 53.5 percent. On Oct. 1, the Council of Ministers adopted the draft as the International Monetary Fund dialled up the pressure on Lebanon, urging it to pass key reforms.—APP

Israeli forces shell South Syria, raid village

DAMASCUS: Israeli forces shelled areas in southern Syria and carried out a ground incursion into a village in Quneitra province on Saturday, opening fire toward civilian homes and journalists, according to reports by the Syrian state news agency SANA. Several artillery shells landed on the outskirts of Abidin in the Yarmouk Basin area of western Daraa countryside as Israeli reconnaissance aircraft flew overhead, SANA reported. No casualties were immediately reported. In neighboring Quneitra province, an Israeli military patrol entered the village of Saïda Al-Hanout and opened heavy fire toward residential buildings, according to SANA. The agency said Israeli forces also fired directly at media crews, including a SANA reporting team, apparently in an attempt to prevent journalists from documenting the incursion. Residents reported heightened tension and panic as gunfire continued through the village. No casualties were reported. The incidents followed Israeli ground incursions into southern Quneitra earlier this week. Israeli armored vehicles entered the villages of Bariqa and Al-Hamidiyah on Wednesday, according to SANA. Israeli forces also carried out an overnight incursion into Maariya village in western Daraa on Thursday, detaining two residents, SANA reported. About 12 Israeli military vehicles entered the village through its northern road, raided and searched several homes and detained two people. One was later released, while the whereabouts of the other remained unknown, according to the agency. The latest shelling also followed an Israeli artillery attack on Sept. 22 that targeted the outskirts of Abidin and sent shrapnel toward civilian homes. No casualties were reported. The Israeli operations came as UN Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Claudio Cordone warned that Israeli military activity in southern Syria was threatening stability and deeply affecting local residents. Speaking to UN News on Thursday, Cordone said Israeli military operations, shelling, abductions and searches were having a serious impact on communities in the south. He called for a diplomatic solution that respects Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as UN Security Council resolutions and international law. Cordone urged the international community to turn its political support for Syria into practical assistance for economic recovery and rebuilding. He also said the United Nations would explore with the Syrian government the possibility of an international recovery and reconstruction conference. About 4 million people have returned to Syria despite difficult economic conditions and damaged infrastructure, Cordone said. SANA, reporting on Cordone's remarks, said he also welcomed steps toward rebuilding state institutions, including the formation of Syria's People's Assembly and efforts to integrate the Syrian Democratic Forces into state institutions. Israel has repeatedly carried out incursions, raids and artillery attacks in southern Syria since the fall of President Bashar Assad in December 2024. Syria says the operations violate the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, which established a demilitarized buffer zone and separation of forces between Israel and Syria following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Damascus has repeatedly called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Syrian territory and urged the international community to enforce relevant UN resolutions and international law. Israel captured most of the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and later annexed the territory in a move not recognized by the United Nations. Cordone has stressed that Syria's recovery and political transition must respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. He also said accountability, truth-seeking, reparations and institutional reform were essential to helping the country overcome the legacy of past abuses and achieve lasting peace.—Agencies

Balochistan fisheries bill reviewed in Gwadar

GWADAR: The Balochistan Provincial Assembly's Standing Committee on Fisheries reviewed the proposed Balochistan Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill 2026 at a meeting in Gwadar. The proposed legislation focuses on protecting fishermen's rights, conserving marine resources, promoting aquaculture and strengthening regulation of the fisheries sector. Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. Participants raised concerns over illegal trawling and prohibited fishing nets and called for stronger enforcement. They also discussed a science-based fishing-season closure policy linked to fish breeding periods.

The meeting considered proposals to strengthen fisheries research, improve data collection and enhance the role of the Fisheries Council.

Committee Chairman Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch said feedback from fishermen and other stakeholders would be considered before the bill is finalized and submitted for approval through the required legal procedures.

The meeting was the Standing Committee on Fisheries' first held outside Quetta.—APP

Sisi urges 'dialogue, not confrontation

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Sunday urged African leaders to pursue "dialogue, not confrontation" in addressing cross-border challenges, ahead of talks in Egypt involving Ethiopia's neighbours as concerns grow that escalating violence could spill across borders.

Speaking at the African Union's mid-year coordination summit in the Mediterranean city of El-Alamein, El-Sisi said cross-border challenges "require cooperation, not competition, and dialogue, not confrontation, including the management and use of natural resources and transboundary rivers in accordance with international law."—APP

Tanker damaged after attack in Hormuz

DUBAI: An attack on a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz damaged its engine room, a British maritime agency said Sunday, without specifying when the incident occurred.

Iran has sought to impose control over the vital shipping lane since the start of its war with the United States and Israel.

It has repeatedly targeted vessels in the waterway that it accuses of transiting without its authorization, while the United States has struck ships allegedly attempting to skirt a counterblockade of Iranian ports. An "unknown projectile" struck the ship but the crew were unharmed, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Centre (UK-MTO) said. No environmental impact had been recorded from the attack, it added. The agency did not specify the date of the incident, the vessel's origin or destination, or whether it was an oil tanker or LNG carrier.—APP

UAE, Syria banks sign MoU to deepen financial coop

RIYADH: The central banks of the UAE and Syria signed a memorandum of understanding on financial and technical cooperation, as the two countries seek to strengthen banking ties and exchange regulatory expertise. The agreement was signed by Khaled Mohamed Balama, governor of the Central Bank of the UAE, and Mohammad Safwat Abdel Hamid Raslan, governor of the Central Bank of Syria, according to the Emirates News Agency, or WAM. The MoU provides a framework for cooperation on institutional capacity building, technical expertise and regulatory frameworks, with the two central banks set to exchange knowledge in areas of mutual interest.

The agreement comes as Syria seeks to expand its banking sector and attract foreign investment. In September, Raslan said foreign capital for establishing new banks was expected to exceed \$1 billion, as the country seeks to restore links with international financial networks. The comments followed growing interest from regional financial institutions, with seven delegations expressing interest in establishing banks in Syria, according to the central bank.—APP

India's 'cleanest village' bars visitors on Sundays to regain peace

NEW DELHI: When they lock their gates to the outside world every Sunday, residents of Mawlynnong get to enjoy a mandatory day of rest from overwhelming crowds, remembering how life used to be before they shot to fame as India's cleanest village.

Located in India's mountainous state of Meghalaya, near the border with Bangladesh, Mawlynnong boasts lush green trees, flower-decked streets, and neatly maintained houses. In every corner, there is a cone-shaped bamboo dustbin, and no trace of litter anywhere in the area. The air is clean, free from construction dust and vehicle exhaust.

Visitors need to park their cars or buses in a designated area outside and walk down to the village gate, where they are charged about one dollar to enter.

Home to 500 people, Mawlynnong has been seeing around twice as many tourists every day. The popularity started in the early 2000s, after local media showed how clean the remote village was – a feat in a country where sanitation remains a challenge in rural areas. Soon, the Discover India magazine arrived too, and made a documentary in which it named Mawlynnong "the cleanest village in Asia" – a declaration that brought sudden welfare to the region and transformed its economy.

"Until 2003, it was a nondescript village growing betel nuts, betel leaves," Philemon Khondlanoh, head of the

village council, told Arab News.

"Now, only 30 percent of the villagers do farming, and 70 percent are engaged in business activities related to tourism." But what does not change is the traditional approach to cleanliness. Every day, people tend to their houses and gardens, and every week, on Saturday, the whole village gathers to tidy up all the common areas.

"The villagers have the habit of keeping their compounds very clean ... It's not that we started maintaining sanitation after we became popular. I remember, when I was in my village school, our teacher used to engage us in social work," said Miranda Khongthohrem, a resident whose family – like many in Mawlynnong – runs a homestay. "We carried the habit of cleaning – both within and outside the house. Even a small kid knows how to maintain cleanliness. This is all because of our school and parents." The residents of Mawlynnong belong to the Khasi people, an Indigenous matrilineal community where women inherit property and are responsible for the household. It is also a Christian village, where Welsh missionaries introduced the religion in the 19th century. One of the oldest sites and main community centers is the Church of the Epiphany, built by the missionaries in 1902. To have peace in adhering to their religion, participating in mass at the church, and spending time with family, the village's residents have been barring tourists from entering on Sundays since January this year.

Not all tourists are aware of the ban and every week groups will still gather at the gates and leave disappointed – it takes about three hours by car to reach Mawlynnong from the state capital, Shillong. Khongthohrem feels sorry for them as she knows tourist presence is what has uplifted the village: "Almost every household in the village is engaging in touristic activities. It has contributed a lot to our livelihood and economic well-being. The village has changed and people are richer," she said.

"During the peak season, like October, November, December, per week we have five or six days of bookings. On average, three to four days a week our homestay is booked. I charge 1,500 rupees (\$15) per day ... My family's economic situation has improved since we came into the business."

Yet the one day of rest is what the whole community needs. One day without crowds, trade and noise.

"We have an exit and entry point and reception, and whenever I reach there, I see tourists. Most of the tourists don't know. They have not seen the notification yet ... most of the tourists feel angry," Khongthohrem said. "I saw many of the tourists, sometimes two-three buses, and sometimes so many vehicles. I do feel pain for them ... But as a resident, I feel good at least once a week. We can experience the silence, the peacefulness and we can relax. It's like in the old days—Agencies

Briefs

Philippines accuses China of harassing patrols

DNA

MANILA: The Philippines accused China's military and coast guard on Sunday of harassing Filipino government aircraft and boats in two areas of the disputed South China Sea. A J-16 fighter interfered with a Filipino Cessna 208 turboprop that was conducting a "routine military patrol" near Scarborough Shoal on Saturday, a Philippine armed forces statement said.

"The J-16 repeatedly approached and maneuvered in close proximity to the Philippine aircraft, including maneuvering ahead of and around it and positioning itself within the Philippine aircraft's wake," it said. While the Filipino aircraft completed its mission safely, the Filipino military called the incident "part of a recurring pattern of unsafe and coercive behavior against Philippine government vessels and aircraft conducting lawful operations".

Tehran's
wartime
billboards
mock Trump,
boast of victory

DNA

TEHRAN: Huge billboards on the walls of Tehran mocking US President Donald Trump and depicting American drones under the boot of an Iranian soldier are providing a chronicle of Iran's war with the United States and Israel.

AFP got rare access to a team producing the billboards with anti-US messaging for prominent locations in Tehran where they are seen daily by large crowds of passers-by, including the city's famed Valiasr Square.

Khaneh-ye Tarhahan, or Designers' House, created a towering portrayal of Trump's lips sewn and his mouth muzzled by the Strait of Hormuz waterway at the center of the Iran war, accompanied by the words "At the breaking point."

Houthis take Yemen war to Riyadh

Saudi strikes pound Sanaa in sharp escalation

Saudi authorities yet to comment on attack; Houthi-affiliated Al-Masirah TV reports at least 26 Saudi strikes on Sanaa

DNA

RIYADH: Yemen's Houthis claimed an attack on an oil facility near the Saudi capital on Saturday, where a journalist saw flames and smoke, and accused the Gulf kingdom of striking Sanaa dozens of times. The foes have traded strikes since the Houthis seized all of Yemen's Red Sea coast and took control of the Bab al-Mandab strait in a lightning offensive last month. Houthi-affiliated channel Al-Masirah TV reported that "Saudi enemy aircraft" hit Sanaa with 26 strikes, after earlier reporting "Saudi aggression" against the Yemeni capital, without providing details on the targets or casualties.

While the Saudi authorities are yet to comment, late on Saturday, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said the group had targeted an oil facility in Riyadh with ballistic missiles and drones, adding that they sparked fires at the targeted sites.

The AFP journalist reported seeing firefighters attempting to extinguish a blaze at Aramco's Riyadh refinery, located south of the capital, while ambulances and police vehicles were stationed near the facility.

The Houthis' Al-Masirah channel earlier on Saturday also reported missile strikes on the telecommunications network in Yemen's northwestern governorate of Saada, one of the group's strongholds. It comes after the Houthis said Saudi Ara-

bia bombed the Yemeni capital itself on Thursday night for the first time since renewed fighting broke out between the two sides in July. After several years of calm, Yemen was plunged back into civil war that month, pitting the Iran-backed Houthis, who control most of northwestern Yemen including Sanaa, against Yemen's internationally recognised government. The government, based in the city of Aden, controls much of the country's south and east – a region that is larger but much less populated. Hostilities were reignited after four years of a fragile truce when Iran sent a plane to Sanaa carrying a Houthi delegation. The flight did not seek authorisation from Saudi Arabia, contravening a practice in place for a decade.

Riyadh retaliated with strikes on Sanaa airport, and in response the Houthis attacked Saudi territory for the first time since 2022. Since then, fighting has intensified, with the Houthis launching a lightning offensive in which they seized control of coastal regions along the Bab al-Mandab strait. They have also struck multiple Saudi targets, including oil infrastructure and the capital Riyadh, while also announcing a naval blockade on Saudi shipping in the Red Sea. The renewed fighting has worsened the already appalling humanitarian conditions in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, with the World Food Programme warning on Friday that three-quarters of the population was unable to meet its basic food needs.

Korean leader oversees launch of missile

“We must continue our responsible efforts nonstop to constantly and repeatedly make the enemy recognize the reliability and fatality of our strategic offensive means,” he added. Photos released by KCNA showed a missile soaring into the sky in a burst of orange flame

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the launch of a missile with his daughter, state media reported on Sunday, which allegedly used artificial intelligence to adjust its trajectory. The AI technology means the missile is “capable of changing its flight orbit at a low altitude,” Kim’s powerful sister had said, adding this meant there was “no way to avoid” the attack. It launched from an area around the eastern coastal city of Wonsan early Saturday morning and flew more than 700 kilometers (435 miles), South Korea’s military said, without giving further details. “Through today’s launching drill, the strategic missile soldiers have fully demonstrated their professional qualifications and counterattack posture,” Kim said after overseeing the launch, according to an English-language dispatch by the official Korean Central News Agency. “We must continue our responsible efforts nonstop to constantly and repeatedly make the enemy recognize the reliability and fatality of our strategic offensive means,” he added. Photos released by KCNA showed a missile soaring into the sky in a burst of orange flame. Another photo showed Kim smiling, flanked by his daughter Ju Ae and wife Ri Sol Ju, who is seen clapping her hands in celebration. Ju Ae, who was first introduced to the public in 2022, is the most likely successor to her father according to South Korea’s spy agency, citing her increasingly prominent role at major state and military events. The launch was conducted to help train soldiers operating the “hypersonic strategic weapon system,” KCNA reported. It came days after Seoul’s military demanded an apology from Pyongyang for a blast that wounded three South Korean soldiers in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which it blamed on the North. — DNA

Two dead in flooding in Spain's Catalonia region

MADRID: Two people have died and another was missing after heavy rains and flooding in Spain's Catalonia region, authorities said on Sunday. Catalan leader Salvador Illa confirmed the death of a man after a wall collapsed in Tordera, a town to the north of Barcelona, in a message on his social media account on Sunday. Another person died in Montornès del Valles, firefighters said on Sunday, while emergency services were searching for a missing person in Pineda de Mar, a town 52 km (32 miles) to the north of Barcelona.

Catalan authorities issued a red alert warning and urged people to stay inside from 8 p.m. (1800 GMT) on Saturday until Sunday at 2 p.m. (1200 GMT) because a "mini-hurricane" could hit the northeastern region, with more heavy rain forecast. Homes were flooded and cars left submerged in Bellvitge and Cornellà near Barcelona after torrential rain on Saturday. Ducks swam in huge puddles that formed on motorways in Barcelona. Sarai Sarroca, director of regional weather service Meteoact, said on Saturday that the core of an exceptional weather system was over the Mediterranean and a "mini-hurricane" could move over land in Catalonia. — APP

Iran executes detainee

TEHRAN: Iran has executed a man detained during protests in January for allegedly firing at police, the judiciary said on Saturday. The judiciary said Siavash Jamshidi Kheirabadi fired at least three shots at police on January 8 and was arrested two days later with a handgun in Shahrekord in southwestern Iran. It accused him of contacting people online to organize "anti-security" activities and seeking payment for a "mission," without identifying who was purported to be behind it. The protests erupted on December 28, 2025, over economic hardship and swelled into widespread demonstrations calling for the end of clerical rule in the Islamic Republic. Iran blamed armed groups and operatives backed by the US and Israel for involvement in the protests and for some of the violence. **APP**



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Jordanr Dr. Maen Khreasat had the pleasure to receive my new Swiss colleague H.E. Mr. Stephane Rey. They had a fruitful conversation on bilateral cooperation and regional developments. – **DNA**

Ethiopia controls Tigray capital

NEWS DESK

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian federal forces were in full control of the Tigray rebels' regional capital, a local journalist said Sunday, while Ethiopia's regional rivals gathered in Egypt to discuss the risk of a wider war. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) launched attacks against federal forces on September 23, sparking fears of a return to the devastating civil war of 2020-2022. The presidents of Egypt, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea – all of whom have difficult relations with Ethiopia – were set to meet in the Egyptian city of Alamein on Sunday to discuss the conflict.

Ethiopia has accused Eritrea of directly backing the Tigray rebels, with the added support of Sudan and Egypt, which all three countries deny. A counter-offensive has seen the Ethiopian forces push deep into rebel-held territory, entering the regional capital, Mekelle, on Saturday without a fight, as TPLF leaders and troops abandoned the city. Federal troops were patrolling Mekelle and manning key institutions on Sunday, a local journalist told AFP, as communications were restored for the first time in more than a week. "We have taken control of Mekelle and we are marching forward," a commander with a pro-government militia told AFP. Businesses and shops remained closed, with owners moving

stock to safer locations ahead of time, fearing looting and vandalism. "There are no police. Last night, we had to organise ourselves and take care of security," one resident told AFP, like others speaking on condition of anonymity because of uncertainty of the situation. The mini-summit in Alamein was set to bring together Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki and Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, as well as the head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, on the sidelines of an African Business Forum. Eritrea, which shares a long border with Tigray state, is most directly involved in the conflict.

Four injured sailors, remains of three others Somali pirate victims head to Karachi

Pakistani envoys see off four injured MT Honour 25 crew members and three bodies from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Four injured Pakistani crew members of MT Honour 25 and the mortal remains of three sailors have left Addis Ababa for Karachi, the Foreign Office said on Sunday. The injured crew members — Usman Ghani, Aqeel Khan, Ameen bin Shams and Yasir Khan — along with the mortal remains of Rafiullah Khan, Syed Kashif Umer and Mahmood Ahmad Ansari, departed aboard Ethiopian Airlines flight ET 694. Pakistan's ambassadors to Djibouti and Ethiopia saw them off in Addis Ababa, while the flight is expected to arrive in Karachi today, the FO said. The development comes after Somali authorities carried out an operation to free the hijacked MT Honour 25. Puntland authorities said their forces freed the tanker and captured 16 pirates during the operation. Five crew members were killed, including three Pakistanis, while four others were injured. The Palau-flagged tanker had been seized by pirates on April 21 around 30 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia's Puntland region. There were 17 crew members aboard the vessel, including 10 Pakistani nationals. The injured Pakistani crew members were receiving medical treatment after being brought safely ashore, while Pa-

kistan's diplomatic mission in Djibouti was coordinating with Somali authorities and other stakeholders to assist the nationals and facilitate their repatriation. On October 2, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar said that three Pakistani crew members – Imran Ali, Yasim Muhammad and Syed Yousuf Hussain – remained aboard MT Honour 25 along with the captain, with efforts underway to facilitate their safe return to Pakistan.

The development follows the Prime Minister's Office statement a day ago that the mortal remains of the three deceased Pakistanis had reached Addis Ababa, where Ethiopian Airlines staff were completing necessary preparations for their onward transportation to Karachi.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had directed the relevant authorities to complete the repatriation process at the earliest and assured the bereaved families of all possible assistance. The prime minister also spoke by telephone with Azhan Kashif, son of the deceased Syed Kashif Umar, and expressed his condolences over his father's death. PM Shehbaz had announced Rs12.5 million in financial assistance for each family of the three Pakistani sailors killed during the recovery operation. He also announced free education and healthcare for their children, as well as a house for each bereaved family.



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