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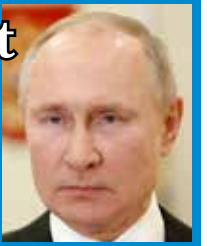
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WHO chief for transparency on plague reports

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Russian President tells Iran he is ready to mediate

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Rana Sanaullah says

Doors for talks with the PTI remain open

The PML-N leader described the PTI as having been "successful" in obstructing peace. He lamented that politics had been transformed into a culture of "below the belt" jabs at one another and a "culture of intolerance"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The PTI cannot pressure the government into accepting its demands by holding the state "hostage" and creating political instability, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah said on Wednesday. Speaking to the media in Islamabad, Sanaullah said that the government would not allow the opposition to use talks as a "tool" for making political demands. "The doors for talks are open," Sanaullah said, recalling Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's remarks yesterday calling on the PTI leadership to sit down with the government for dialogue and abandon their protest plans. However, Sanaullah said, negotiations could not be used to strong-arm the government. The PML-N leader described the PTI as having been "successful" in obstructing peace. He lamented that politics had been transformed into a culture of "below the belt" jabs at one another and a "culture of intolerance". On Sunday, hours-long negotiations between the government and the op-

KP CM says will not allow military operation

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The PTI convoy led by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sohail Afridi reached the Khyber district on Wednesday with the provincial chief executive vowing that he would not allow another military operation in KP. The route plan for the march, being carried out to demand the release of jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, has been changing since it began. The PTI earlier planned that the chief minister would lead his convoy to Khairabad — which borders Punjab's Attock — on Oct 8 and announce the next plan of action. However, according to a statement released by CM Afridi's office, he told the protesters in Khyber today that the long march would now go all the way to Swabi, where he would announce the next plan of action. But a member of the PTI's social media team, Omar Farooq, told Dawn that the final destination remained tentative for now. He also confirmed that the march will reach Peshawar on Thursday and spend the night tomorrow in Charsadda. The plan was also shared by the focal person to the chief minister on social media, Yar Muhammad Khan Niazi.

position during a second round of talks ended in a "deadlock". The meeting at Parliament House began on Saturday afternoon and continued into the wee hours of Sunday, with discussions focusing on the PTI's planned Oct 4 march to Islamabad. After the talks collapsed, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi accused Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi of "sabotaging"

Continued on Page 06

Meets UN Secy General

Field Marshal reaffirms resolve to world peace

According to ISPR, the UN secretary general paid tribute to the sacrifices and contributions of Pakistan and its armed forces in the war against terror and in UN peacekeeping missions

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to international peace in a meeting with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, the military's media affairs wing said. The UN secretary general is currently in Islamabad on a two-day official visit. In a statement on Wednesday, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Guterres called on CDF Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. "During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, the prevailing

Continued on Page 06

Pak troops already in Saudi Arabia across multiple domains: ISPR

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani troops are already present in Saudi Arabia across multiple capabilities and domains, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director-General (DG) Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Wednesday. Asked by CNN whether Pakistani troops or personnel were already on the ground

Continued on Page 06

Chief of strategic command Gen Aamer calls on Ishaq Dar

They discussed matters of national security and exchanged views on regional and international developments. They agreed on the importance of close institutional coordination in advancing Pakistan's national interests and contributing to regional peace and security

SAIFULLAH ANSAR



ISLAMABAD: Commander National Strategic Command General Syed Aamer Raza, NI (M), called on the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday. The DPM/FM congratulated General Syed Aamer Raza on his promotion and appointment as Commander of the National Strategic Command and wished him all the success in his new responsibilities. They discussed matters of national security and exchanged views on regional and international developments. They agreed on the importance of close institutional coordination in advancing Pakistan's national interests and contributing to regional peace and security.

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF TAJIKISTAN



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Ahsan Iqbal Federal Minister for Planning, Prime Minister Coordinator on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Senator Talah Mahmood, Ambassador of Tajikistan Yusuf Sharifzoda and others cutting cake to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Tajikistan. — DNA

Gohar says Govt should not attach strings to talks

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan has called for unconditional negotiations with the federal government, saying dialogue is essential to resolving political issues and safeguarding democracy. "We are not refusing negotiations; they should be held unconditionally," he told the media in Islamabad. Barrister Gohar termed successful negotiations between the PTI and the federal government essential for the nation and democracy. The PTI chief opposed the imposition of governor's rule or an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying the province was in the grip of terrorism. He also called for meetings with

Continued on Page 06

Time has come to make crucial decisions: Asif

NEWS DESK

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that the time has come for the government to take crucial decisions, warning that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) can no longer be left "at the mercy" of what he described as incompetent and insensitive rulers and alleged Taliban allies. In a statement, Asif said the unity of the country could not be put at risk and that an entire province could not be held hostage. "The time has come to make crucial decisions. KPK cannot be left any longer to the mercy of incompetent, insensitive rulers and Taliban allies. Enough is enough," Asif said.

PM Shehbaz directs acceleration of ML-1 project upgrade

"The real commercial potential of railway properties needs to be harnessed," he said, calling for the effective use of valuable railway land for commercial purposes to contribute to the national economy and the development of Pakistan Railways

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed authorities to accelerate work on the Main Line-1 (ML-1) railway upgrade and introduce corporate-style reforms in Pakistan Railways. The ML-1 project aims to upgrade and modernise key infrastructure to enhance freight and passenger connectivity from Karachi to Peshawar. Presiding over a meeting on Pakistan Railways on Wednesday, the prime minister appreciated the efforts of teams from the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the Ministry of Railways, led by the NAB chairman, to identify and recover encroached railway land, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

Continued on Page 06

UN Secretary General calls on PM Shehbaz

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister lauded the Secretary-General for his principled commitment to the UN Charter, multilateralism, international law, dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Picture on Page 2

He also acknowledged his outstanding contribution to international peace and

Continued on Page 06

Russia kills 11 in strikes on Ukraine

Moscow launched 130 drones, 48 cruise missiles and also ballistic missiles to attack Ukraine, says Ukrainian air force

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia fired 70 missiles and also drones in one of its biggest strikes at Ukraine, targeting the Ukrainian energy sector and killing at least 11 people across

the country, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. "One of the key targets was our energy infrastructure. The Russians wanted to strike painfully and demonstratively," Zelenskyy said on the Telegram app. "Russian ballistic missiles remain the greatest challenge. And air defence packages for us right now are a vital necessity." "Ukraine has once again been hit by Russian missiles throughout the night,"

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Briefs

18 India-backed terrorists killed in KP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have killed 18 India-backed terrorists in multiple operations conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, security sources said on Wednesday. The operations were carried out against Fitna al-Khawarij in KP under the Azme-Istehkam vision and Fitna al-Hindustan in Balochistan, said the security sources. Security forces targeted militant hideouts in KP's North Waziristan district and adjoining areas, killing 13 militants, they added. Separately, security forces conducted an operation against Fitna al-Hindustan in Mastung, killing five militants, according to the sources. Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the militants during the operation, the security sources said.

Putin tells Tehran ready to help mediate

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has told his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian in a phone call that Moscow is ready to help efforts to mediate the Middle East war, AFP reports citing Iranian state media. The Russian leader and Pezeshkian, in their call, have spoken of the "positive and expanding trajectory of relations" between the two allies, stressing the need to further deepen ties, state news agency IRNA reports. On the war, Putin "referred to efforts by some countries to mediate and help reduce tensions, saying that Russia supports" them, the agency reports, adding that Putin said that Iran "can be assured that Moscow is also ready to play a role and provide assistance in this regard".

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Kundi assures support to resolve industries' issues

Governor Kundi listened to the delegation's concerns and assured them that he would take up the matters with the relevant authorities and extend every possible cooperation for their resolution.

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday assured the business community of his full support in resolving the issues being faced by the Malagori Marble Industries and Bara

Steel and Furnace Industries. The assurance came during a meeting with a delegation led by President of the Khyber Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the Pakistan Borders Trade Council, Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi, at the Governor House. The delegation included representatives of the Malagori Marble Industries Association and Bara Steel and Furnace Industries, along with prominent businessmen. During the meeting, the delegation highlighted issues relating to electricity supply and tariffs, provision of easy industrial financing through commercial banks, declaration of Malagori as a Marble Industrial Zone, and concerns of the business community over the imposition of taxes in the merged districts. Governor Kundi listened to the delegation's concerns and assured them that he would take up the matters with the relevant au-

thorities and extend every possible cooperation for their resolution.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a police checkpoint in Kohat and expressed concern over injuries to four police personnel.

The Governor said the police responded promptly and effectively to the attack, inflicting heavy losses on the terrorists, which reflected the force's bravery and professionalism. Faisal Karim Kundi said the sacrifices of the police and security forces in the fight against terrorism would not go in vain, adding that the nefarious designs of terrorists would be foiled. He prayed for the early recovery of the injured policemen and said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the police and security forces in the ongoing fight against terrorism.—APP

IHC grants bail to woman accused in murder case

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday granted post-arrest bail to a woman accused Mahnoor Shahid in a murder and abduction case. Justice Shahrukh Arjmand granted bail to the accused against surety bonds of Rs. 500,000 through a written order.

The court observed that the accused was not named in the initial First Information Report (FIR) and was subsequently nominated through a supplementary statement. Under Section 497 of the Pakistan Penal Code, grant of bail to a female accused is a rule, the court noted. The court further observed that no direct and specific role in the murder had emerged against the accused and that the matter required further inquiry. It noted that the challan had already been submitted, the investigation had been completed and no further investigation of the accused was required. The court clarified that its observations were tentative in nature and would not affect the final decision of the trial court. According to the case record, a case was registered at Phulgran Police Station on May 4, regarding the abduction and murder of Farukh Afzal.—APP

Sindhi video on medicines' adverse reporting

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has developed an animated video in Sindhi to educate patients and healthcare professionals about reporting suspected adverse events associated with medicines. According to official sources, the video, developed by the National Pharmacovigilance Centre (NPC), DRAP, explains different channels through which adverse events can be reported to the Provincial Pharmacovigilance Centre in Sindh and the National Pharmacovigilance Centre. DRAP encouraged patients.—APP

PTI imposed under 'special agenda' to destabilise country: Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways, Hanif Abbasi on Wednesday said the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) stance was contributing to igniting political instability in the country backed by external conspiracy. Addressing a press conference, Abbasi said those pursuing the agenda knew Pakistan, being a nuclear power, could not be defeated through conventional means and therefore sought to create internal instability and law-and-order problems. The minister warned political workers against becoming "fuel" for political leaders, saying workers had repeatedly suffered during political confrontations. Referring to incidents including October 10, 2014, May 9, October 4-5, 2024, and November 26, he questioned whether PTI leaders had remembered the workers who lost their lives or faced imprisonment during such incidents. "Did they ever go and apologise to their families? Did they make any arrangements for their children or elderly parents?" he asked. Abbasi said political workers who were jailed for violating the law and Constitution had been left to face their cases on their own. He urged workers of all political parties to consider whether they were sacrificing their lives for leaders who did not even remember their names. The minister said political parties had the right to organise campaigns and hold protests, but they must remain within the law and Constitution. He said some political activities had targeted state institutions responsible for protecting the country and its people. Abbasi said India and Israel,

along with elements based in Afghanistan, were involved in a nexus aimed at promoting terrorism in Pakistan. He said militants operating from Afghanistan were receiving financial and intelligence support from outside the country and were being used to carry out attacks in Pakistan. He said terrorism was the main source of livelihood for certain elements in Afghanistan and that militants were being supported to export terrorism into Pakistan. The minister also questioned the performance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, asking why the province had not adequately addressed education, healthcare and security issues despite receiving substantial funds. He urged the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa not to allow political interests to divide the country along ethnic or provincial lines. Abbasi said Rs 8,500 billion had been provided to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa between 2010 and 2025 and questioned how the money had been utilised. He said the provincial government should explain what it had done with the funds and what responsibilities it had fulfilled. The minister also criticised the provincial government over the deteriorating security situation. He said around 6,200 incidents of terrorism had taken place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the past two years, resulting in around 1,200 deaths. He added that 37 suicide attacks had taken place during the period, including 14 in the first year, and said 97 per cent of the suicide attackers were from Afghanistan.—APP

Call for vertical development to address housing challenge

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday called for promoting vertical development and modernizing construction practices to address Pakistan's growing housing needs while protecting agricultural land from unchecked horizontal expansion. He was addressing a meeting of the eighth National Economic Mission under the "Uraan Pakistan" framework, focusing on the Housing, Construction and Real Estate Market Activation Mission. The minister said Pakistan must activate every sector of the economy to achieve the vision of a US\$ one trillion economy, stressing that sustainable economic growth would not be possible without a significant and sustained increase in exports. He said Pakistan must enhance its export potential and increase the capacity of its productive sectors, adding that achieving US\$ 100 billion in exports by 2035 would be essential for attaining greater economic self-reliance. Ahsan Iqbal said the real estate and construction sectors were the backbone of any economy, as they were linked with multiple industries and generated

significant employment opportunities.

The presentation highlighted that construction supported 72 allied industries and accounted for approximately 9.5 per cent of national employment. He noted that Pakistan was facing a serious housing challenge, with population growth increasing demand while a large segment of the population remained without adequate housing facilities. The country's urban population increased from approximately 76 million in 2017 to 94 million in 2023, while annual housing demand was estimated at 700,000 units against a supply of 250,000 units, leaving an annual shortfall of approximately 450,000 homes. The minister emphasized the need to promote vertical development and better utilize limited land resources, while protecting agricultural land from unchecked horizontal expansion. Figures presented at the meeting showed that built-up areas increased by 104 per cent in Islamabad, 59 per cent in Lahore, 43 per cent in Karachi, 44 per cent in Peshawar and 72 per cent in Quetta between 2005 and 2022. He said Pakistan needed to modernize construction practices by introducing new technologies, innovation

and more efficient building methods.

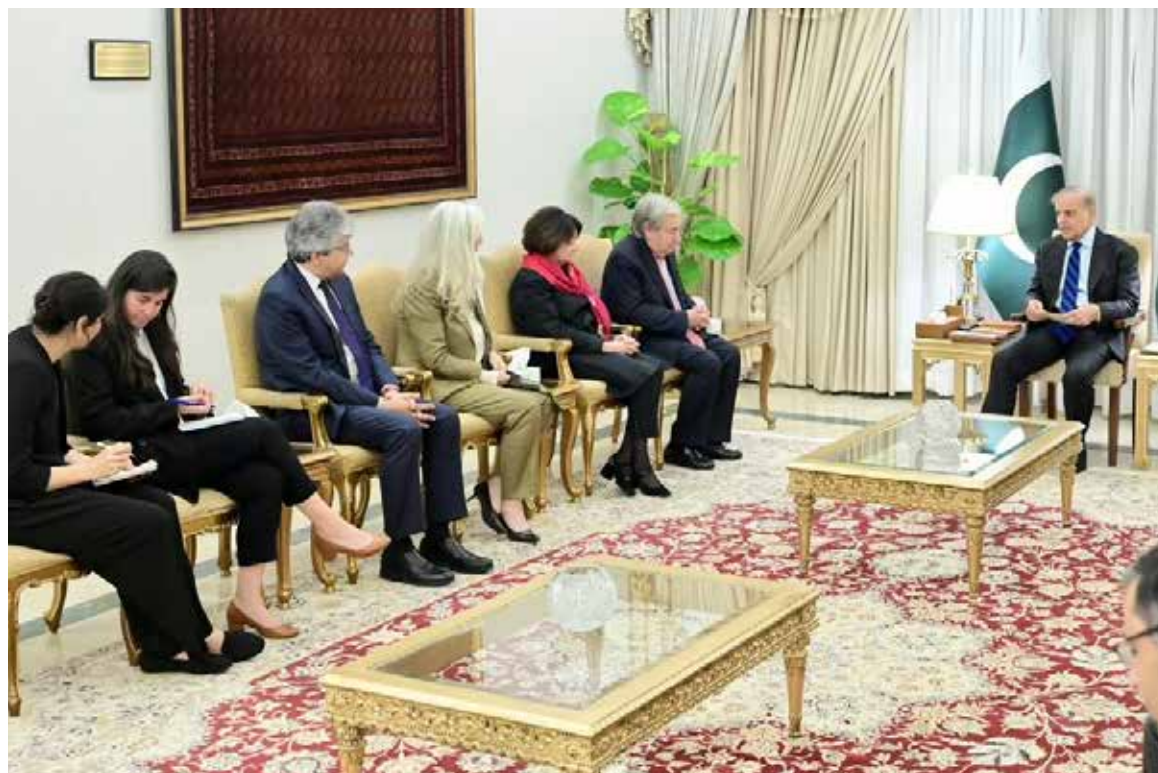
Ahsan highlighted Pakistan's strong pool of skilled and technical human resources, noting that Pakistani workers had demonstrated their capabilities in the construction sector across the Middle East.

However, he said Pakistani construction companies must also build a strong international presence and compete in global markets. The minister stressed that the public and private sectors must work together to build a stronger economy, while continuity of policies and political stability were essential for sustainable economic development.

He said the private sector must become the engine of growth, adding that Pakistan was already producing quality construction materials and should now focus on developing projects capable of generating exports and foreign exchange. The minister emphasized that the construction sector should not remain limited to meeting domestic requirements but must also be developed as a source of exports, investment and foreign exchange earnings. Member Planning Commission Waqas Anwar briefed the meeting on the proposed housing, construction and real estate reform framework. The presentation outlined proposed targets of 300,000-400,000 housing units annually under the House Ownership Plan for Everyone and increasing mortgage finance from below 0.5 per cent of GDP to five percent by 2035.—APP

KU advances physics edu, research for national progress

KARACHI: Science and research are not merely a collection of instruments, data, and experiments, but rather an effective means of understanding nature, unveiling its hidden secrets, and discovering the fundamental laws of the universe. Scientific research begins with questions, curiosity, and observation, and through evidence, analysis, and experimentation, humankind strives to comprehend unknown realities. These views were expressed by the Chairman of the Department of Physics, University of Karachi, Professor Dr Intikhab Ulfat. He expressed these views while addressing the inaugural session of the two-day Frontiers of Physics National Symposium on Modern Trends in Physics Research, jointly organized by the Karachi Physics Society and Pakistan Physical Society and hosted by the KU Department of Physics at the department's auditorium. Dr Intikhab Ulfat said that even phenomena that appear trivial in the universe hold extraordinary importance from a scientific perspective. The advancement of human knowledge is in fact the result of continuous questioning, research, and discovery, while modern scientific instruments and technology have enabled humans to observe and analyze phenomena that were once considered inaccessible. He further said that nature does not always answer our questions in the same language in which we ask them; sometimes its responses appear in the form of sounds, signals, vibrations, or waves, which require modern instruments and scientific technology to interpret. According to him, for centuries, humans have raised fundamental questions such as: What are matter, energy, time, and space? These very questions have laid the foundation of physics and other scientific disciplines.—APP



ISLAMABAD: UN Secretary General called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest. The prime minister assured to continue its support to a strong UN. – DNA

PSW brings support to empower women entrepreneurs

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Single Window (PSW) brought together key stakeholders from country's trade, financial and enterprise development ecosystem to equip women entrepreneurs with the knowledge, financial linkages and institutional support needed to strengthen their businesses and pursue opportunities in international trade. The event was held under the Khadijah Women Entrepreneurship Program on the theme "Access to Opportunity: Enabling Women Entrepreneurs" and organized in collaboration with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and Mashreq Bank, said a news release here on Wednesday. The session brought together representatives of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), and IBA Centre for Entrepreneurial Development, Innovation & Research (IBA-CEDIR), alongside business and financial sector stakeholders. The session connected women entrepreneurs with expertise in digital trade facilitation, business development, financial inclusion, export readiness and international market access.

The event was graced by Member of the National Assembly Syed Ali Qasim Gilani and attended by prominent business leaders and institutional representatives, including Senior Vice President FPCCI Saqib Fayyaz Magoon and Patron-in-Chief of United Business Group S. M. Tanveer. Mashreq Bank contributed to the engagement through its session, "Women, Finance & Global Trade," offering valuable insights on financial inclusion, digital banking and trade finance for women-led businesses.—APP

Free hepatitis C screening camp held

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Medical & Dental College (IMDC) on Wednesday conducted a free hepatitis C screening and awareness camp at Al-Firdous Community Model School and College. The one-day community health initiative was organized by IMDC's Department of Community Medicine as part of its community outreach activities. The medical team conducted awareness sessions and free diagnostic screening for community members. A total of 124 individuals, including 114 students and staff members as well as local shopkeepers and residents, were screened during the camp. The initiative also helped identify reactive cases and facilitated their referral through an institutional pathway for further evaluation and treatment at the hospital. The management of Al-Firdous School and College and members of the local community appreciated IMDC's efforts and expressed support for future health screening and awareness campaigns. The initiative reflects IMDC's focus on preventive healthcare, community-based screening and increasing awareness about hepatitis C and its early detection.—APP

National disaster preparedness need further boost: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday said the devastating earthquake of October 8, 2005, remained a painful memory for the entire nation, with the loss of precious lives and widespread destruction in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other affected areas constituting an unforgettable national tragedy.

In a message on the 21st anniversary of the earthquake, the Speaker expressed solidarity with the families affected by the tragedy and

shared their grief over the loss of their loved ones and the hardships they endured. He said the unity, compassion and collective sense of responsibility demonstrated by the Pakistani nation in the aftermath of the disaster represented a proud chapter in the country's history. Ayaz Sadiq said people from across the country, relief organizations, volunteers, the armed forces and civil society actively participated in rescue and relief operations. He particularly appreciated the role of the Pakistan Army, saying its personnel played a

vital part in rescue and relief efforts and provided all possible assistance to people in the affected areas.

The Speaker said the collective efforts and unwavering commitment demonstrated during the reconstruction and rehabilitation process played a significant role in restoring normal life in the affected areas.

He said the experience of the 2005 earthquake highlighted the need for enhanced preparedness for natural disasters and effective coordination among relevant institutions.—APP

Women from Lower Chitral equipped with different skills

PESHAWAR: From learning to earning, women from Lower Chitral have taken an important step towards economic independence by receiving hands-on vocational training under the Ba-Ikhtiyar Women Project at the Drosh Institute of Computer and Technical Education. According to a press release issued here on Wednesday, the initiative supports Pakistan's Vision 2025 priorities and relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting women's economic participation, employment, digital transformation, poverty reduction and inclusive growth. A total of 34 young women completed the training, including 20 in garments and fashion designing and 14 in food processing and value addition. The participants also received training in digital literacy, digital marketing, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, life skills and leadership, equipping them with practical skills and confidence to pursue livelihood opportunities. Funded by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and implemented by Takal Welfare Organization (TWO), with technical support from the Institute of Rural Management (IRM), the initiative was further supported by PTCL, Ufone and UBank, which provided smart mobile phones, Ufone SIMs and UBank accounts to promote digital connectivity and financial inclusion, the press release added. The certificate distribution ceremony was attended by Muhammad Ali,

Assistant Commissioner Drosh, as chief guest, along with representatives of the ADO and ASDO Female Education Department and other stakeholders. Speaking at the ceremony, the participants and organisers stressed that training alone was not enough to ensure sustainable livelihoods, calling for continued support from the government, financial institutions, private-sector organisations and development partners to connect women with finance, markets and mentoring opportunities. They said such support could help the women turn their newly acquired skills into sustainable livelihoods, increased household incomes and greater financial independence.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER

Oct 01/China National Day

Oct 01/Cyprus National Day

Oct 01/Republic of Korea Armed Forces Day

Oct 01/Nigeria Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea National Day

Oct 03/Germany Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain National Day

Oct 23/Hungary National Day

October 24/United Nations United Nations Day

Oct/25/Romania Armed Forces Day

Oct 26/Austria National Day

Oct 27/Turkmenistan Independence Day

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Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

CDA steps up tree plantation drive in capital

During the plantation campaign, suitable species of trees and plants are being selected and planted according to the requirements and environmental suitability of different locations. Improvement of existing green belts, development of new green areas, landscaping of major roads and corridors, and beautification of important public spaces are also key components of the campaign

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), under the directions of Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and the effective supervision and guidance of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf, is carrying out tree plantation, landscaping and beautification activities across the federal capital in full swing. The comprehensive campaign is being implemented by the CDA Environment Wing, headed by Member Environment Abdullah Khurram Niazi. The primary objective of the ongoing tree plantation campaign is to further strengthen Islamabad's unique green character, improve the urban environment, enhance the city's green cover and further establish the federal capital as one of the world's clean, green, beautiful and environment-friendly capitals.

Thousands of trees and plants were planted across Islamabad by the CDA last year, while the current tree plantation campaign is also continuing in full swing. People from all segments of society, particularly citizens, businessmen, the business community, traders, civil society and students, are actively participating in the ongoing campaign. The active participation of people from different walks of life reflects a collective commitment to making Islamabad greener and more beautiful.

On the directions of the Federal Minister for Interior and the Chairman CDA, the CDA Environment Wing has further intensified plantation activities at various locations across the city. Extensive plantation and landscaping work is underway along major roads and avenues, green belts, parks, recreational areas, public spaces, interchanges and other prominent locations. Special attention is also being given to the landscaping and beautification of major entry points and key



roads of the capital. During the plantation campaign, suitable species of trees and plants are being selected and planted according to the requirements and environmental suitability of different locations. Improvement of existing green belts, development of new green areas, landscaping of major roads and corridors, and beautification of important public spaces are also key components of the campaign. The CDA is also paying special attention to the protection and maintenance of newly planted trees and plants to ensure their healthy growth and long-term sustainability. The concerned formations have been directed to regularly

maintain plantation sites, ensure adequate watering and take all necessary measures for the protection of newly planted trees and plants. The Chairman CDA has emphasized that proper maintenance and protection are as important as plantation itself so that the trees planted today can become a permanent part of Islamabad's green cover in the future. The ongoing plantation and landscaping activities will contribute towards creating a healthier and more pleasant urban environment in Islamabad. Increased green cover will provide shade, improve the urban landscape and contribute to environmental sustainability and biodiversity. The enhanced

greenery along major roads, parks, green belts and recreational destinations will further improve the overall beauty and attractiveness of the federal capital. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf has directed the concerned formations to maintain the momentum of the tree plantation campaign and further expand the ongoing activities across different areas of the city. He has also emphasized that the protection and proper maintenance of existing green areas and trees must be ensured alongside new plantation activities so that Islamabad's distinctive green character can be preserved over the long term.

PTV, varsities plan collaboration to train media students

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Television (PTV) and universities across Pakistan will explore collaboration to provide media and communication students with practical training, industry exposure and professional opportunities, as PTV Head Adil Shahzeb met Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training Wajiha Qamar in Islamabad to discuss stronger links between academia and the national media industry. During the meeting, Adil Shahzeb discussed ways to connect PTV with Media and Communication departments of universities and provide students with hands on experience, professional training and opportunities to engage with the media industry. Wajiha Qamar welcomed the initiative and emphasised the importance of closer co-operation between educational institutions and the media industry to equip young professionals with relevant skills and practical experience. The proposed collaboration aims to help bridge the gap between classroom learning and professional media practice by giving students greater exposure to the working environment of the national broadcaster.—APP

Traffic advisory for cricket teams' movement

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Wednesday issued a traffic advisory for the movement of cricket teams, announcing diversions at different points on Islamabad Expressway, Srinagar Highway, Murree Road and Club Road. An ITP official told media that traffic diversions would remain in place at different locations during the teams' movement. Motorists were advised to use alternative routes and leave 20 to 25 minutes earlier than their normal travel time. Srinagar Highway: Traffic diversions will be placed at different points from Serena Chowk to Ninth Avenue. Motorists using Srinagar Highway can use Suhrawardy Road, G-8 Service Road, G-9 Service Road and Zero Point. Traffic towards Faizabad can use Faisal Avenue, while motorists from Ninth Avenue can use Service Road East. Koral to Islamabad: Motorists travelling from Koral towards Islamabad can use Old Airport Road, Rawal Road, Rawalpindi Murree Road, I.J. Principal Road and Faqir Aipee Road. Koral Expressway, Murree Road and Club Road.—APP

Fulbright Scholar Program announced for students

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, in collaboration with the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP), has invited applications for the Fulbright Scholar Program 2027. According to the official announcement shared by the HEC on Wednesday, the prestigious program is open to Pakistani scholars and professionals who wish to pursue lecturing and post-doctoral research opportunities in the United States. The Fulbright Scholar Program is one of the most competitive and fully-funded exchange programs in the world. Under the program, selected scholars will get up to 10 months of grant support. The grant covers international airfare, a living stipend, health insurance, and a research allowance. Notably, the program also funds one accompanying dependent, making it more attractive for senior academics. As per the official notification, the program is open to all disciplines except clinical medicine. This provides a wide opportunity for scholars from social sciences, humanities, sciences, technology, arts, and other fields. The eligibility criteria requires applicants to have a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their field, excellent English communication skills, and must be a Pakistani citizen residing and working in Pakistan at the time of application. The HEC has advised interested candidates to apply online through the official USEFP website at <http://usefp.org/scholarships/fulbright-scholar.cfm>. The last date to submit applications is October 28, 2026. Applicants have been advised to carefully verify admission requirements, deadlines and scholarship details directly from the official program website. HEC said the program is supported under the HEC-USEFP Bilateral Partnership.—DNA

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TIKA powers Pak's future teachers with digital upgrade

ISLAMABAD: Empowering teachers to brighten classrooms, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) has upgraded the Teach For Pakistan Training Center in Islamabad with state-of-the-art digital and solar infrastructure. The centre, which prepares young teachers for public schools in low-income communities, has now been equipped with advanced audiovisual and video conferencing systems, 10 laptops, and a 25 kVA solar energy system. The upgrade will ensure uninterrupted, high-quality in-person and online training for around 115 teaching fellows and 20 trainers every year, ultimately benefiting more than 7,000 students in underprivileged areas. Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar, highlighted the close ties between Pakistan and Türkiye, saying, "We are two countries and one heart." She thanked TIKA for its continued support to the education sector in Pakistan, particularly for strengthening teacher training initiatives. TIKA Vice President Dr. Ali Ercan stated that the project's impact would extend beyond the training centre and these tools will help prepare young teachers who will take their skills, ideas and commitment into public school classrooms across Pakistan. He said "a good teacher helps children learn, but also encourages them to ask questions, gain confidence and see new possibilities for their future.—APP

AIOU extends enrollment deadline till Oct 19

ISLAMABAD: In a major relief for continuing students, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has extended the enrollment deadline for its Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs for the Autumn 2026 semester. On the special directions of the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, the last date for enrollment of continuing students has been extended till October 19, 2026. The decision was taken to facilitate thousands of old students who were unable to complete their enrollment formalities within the earlier deadline. According to the official notification, the extension applies to all ODL programs offered in Autumn 2026. The university clarified that continuing students can now complete their course registration process through the CMS Portal. AIOU is one of the largest distance learning universities in Asia, catering to more than a million students across Pakistan. The university regularly issues such extensions to ensure no student is deprived of education due to time constraints. The administration has advised all continuing students to avail this final opportunity and register their courses immediately to avoid any further inconvenience.—APP

Housing Policy offers roadmap for sustainable housing

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Infrastructure Development Company Limited (PIDCL) Waseem Hayat Bhajwa has said that the National Housing Policy 2025 offers a comprehensive roadmap to address Pakistan's growing housing needs through affordable financing, inclusive planning, sustainable construction and climate-resilient infrastructure. Talking to APP, CEO PIDCL and Chairman of National Housing Policy Working Group said that the policy had been formulated after extensive consultations with federal and provincial institutions, academia, professionals, developers, financial institutions and development partners, with the objective of translating the national housing vision into practical action. He said Pakistan's first National Housing Policy was formulated in 2001, while significant demographic, urban and economic changes over the past 25 years had created the need for a revised national framework. Waseem Bhajwa said the policy review was initiated in January 2025 on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, at the initiative of Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, and through the efforts of Federal Secretary for Housing and Works Capt. (Retd.) Muhammad Mahmood Rai. He said the review was completed in August 2026 following broad-based consultations and expert input. He said the housing challenge was not limited to the shortage of housing units but also involved affordability, access to finance, availability of land, infrastructure, construction costs, informal settlements and climate resilience. The policy, he said, therefore adopted a systems-based approach and was structured around nine strategic themes covering land and planning, housing finance, construction, informal settlements, affordable rental and rural housing, climate resilience, institutional arrangements and capacity building. Highlighting housing finance as a key enabler, the CEO PIDCL said high financing costs, limited mortgage penetration, weak financing mechanisms, short-term lending tenures and land registration issues remained major barriers to affordable housing. The policy proposes stronger housing finance institutions, affordable incremental housing loans, longer financing tenures and improved land information systems to make housing finance more accessible and predictable, he added. Waseem Bhajwa said particular emphasis had been placed on the housing needs of low-and middle-income groups in both urban and rural areas. He said the concept of adequate housing extended beyond the physical structure to include suitable location, secure land, access to physical and social infrastructure, while sustainability encompassed energy efficiency and climate adaptation. The CEO said international development partners, including UN-Habitat, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and JICA, had also contributed to the policy formulation process by sharing technical expertise and international experience. He stressed that the success of the policy would ultimately depend on its effective implementation, noting that a comprehensive action plan had been developed to translate its strategic themes into specific activities, responsibilities, timelines, key performance indicators and expected outcomes. He said coordinated efforts by federal and provincial institutions, local governments, the private sector, financial institutions, development partners and regulators would be essential for achieving the policy objectives. He said the implementation of policy will be done through National Housing Council and provincial housing forums. "We will also assist in preparing provincial housing policies in coordination with UN Habitat," he added. Waseem Bhajwa expressed confidence that effective implementation of the National Housing Policy 2025 would help improve access to adequate, affordable, sustainable and climate-resilient housing for people across the country.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Access to Finance.

Briefs

FBISE extends
deadline
for HSSC
registration

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) Islamabad has extended the deadline for submitting Registration Returns at the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) level for all affiliated institutions to October 30, 2026. The extension was granted in response to requests from affiliated institutions and under the direction and special intervention of the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui. The decision has been taken particularly in view of the difficulties being faced by affiliated institutions in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), as well as other affiliated institutions, in completing the registration process within the previously notified time-frame. The extension is intended to facilitate affiliated institutions and students by providing additional time for the completion of all necessary registration formalities. Accordingly, Registration Returns may now be submitted up to October 30, 2026, with the normal Registration Return fee. In this regard, a revised notification is also being issued by FBISE to all affiliated institutions. The Heads of all affiliated institutions are advised to avail themselves of the extended deadline and ensure that the Registration Returns of all eligible students are duly processed and submitted within the stipulated time-frame.—APP

IESCO
notifies power
suspension
programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Friday on several feeders due to ongoing development works being carried out by the district administration. According to an IESCO spokesperson, electricity supply will remain suspended in parts of Islamabad City Circle from 07:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Service road, Sohan, Highway, Zia Masjid, Iqbal Town, feeders. In Rawalpindi City Circle power supply will remain suspended from 07:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Fazaia, feeder. In Attock Circle electricity will remain suspended from 07:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Col Sher Khan, feeder. IESCO management apologized to its valued consumers for this temporary interruption in electricity supply. The sole purpose of these shutdowns was to facilitate the timely completion of development projects included construction of flyovers, underpasses, installation of new 11kV feeders, road widening and other related development activities. For the convenience of consumers, temporary electricity shutdown schedules were also uploaded on IESCO's official website, www.iesco.com.pk, and its official social media platforms, including Facebook (IESCO Updates) and Twitter/X (IESCO Official Pk). For further information, consumers may call the IESCO Helpline at 118.—APP

Training held
to strengthen
vaccine safety
surveillance

ISLAMABAD: A four-day training on Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) surveillance, Vigiflow and Vaccine-Preventable Disease (VPD) surveillance is being held at the Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI). The training was arranged to strengthen surveillance and reporting capacities at district and facility levels. The training, being conducted from October 6 to 9, is attended by EPI/Immunization and VPD Surveillance Focal Persons, who are participating in practical sessions on AEFI investigation and reporting, Vigiflow, Management Information System (MIS) and VPD case definitions. The participants are also receiving training on laboratory methods for VPD surveillance and reviewing the current status of AEFI and VPD surveillance to identify gaps and develop practical measures for improvement.—APP

ICCI-PBF France & Europe
join hands to expand trade

He said that Pakistan's largely unexplored tourism potential offers significant opportunities for European investors, said a press release issued here on Wednesday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia has called for stronger Pakistan-France business partnerships, particularly in tourism, sustainable infrastructure, luxury brands, fragrances, cosmetics and other high-value sectors, saying Pakistan's largely unexplored tourism potential offers significant opportunities for European investors. Addressing a 12-member delegation of the Pakistan Business Forum France & Europe, led by Vice President Dr. Hamza Taj, at the Chamber House, he said the Forum's focus on economic, technological, cultural and tourism cooperation could help translate

bilateral goodwill into concrete business opportunities. He said Gilgit-Baltistan, northern Pakistan and other scenic regions offered exceptional potential for sustainable tourism development, including eco-friendly cottages, small tourist villages and modern hospitality facilities inspired by successful models in the Swiss and French Alps. Mohammad Zikria Akbar Zia emphasized that Pakistan could benefit considerably from French and European expertise in sustainable tourism, natural-resource management, conservation and hospitality development. He said joint ventures between Pakistani and French companies could help develop tourism destinations, attract more European visitors, create employment and generate investment while protecting the environment and

preserving Pakistan's natural heritage. Vice President Pakistan Business Forum France & Europe Dr. Hamza Taj, Chief Organizer Chaudhary Mohammad Salman Aslam, Secretary General Yassir Khan, Patron-in-Chief Ibrahim Mohammad, Mayor of Villiers-le-Bel Ms. Djida Techtach, Mayor of Creil Omar Yaqoob, Ms. Malika Bilad, Ms. Saima Bhatti and other delegation members highlighted the wide-ranging potential for trade, investment and tourism cooperation between Pakistan and France. The delegation emphasized the importance of close institutional collaboration between the Pakistan Business Forum France & Europe and ICCI to identify, promote and capitalize on emerging business opportunities. ICCI Senior Vice President Mohammad

Ashfaq Hussain Chattah moderated the session, while ICCI Executive Member Ms. Saddaf Asim Abbasi, former ICCI President Mian Shaukat Masood and other participants took part in an interactive question-and-answer session exploring prospects for bilateral trade, investment, tourism and joint ventures. Those prominent among the attendees included ICCI Vice President Mohammad Waqas Khan, Executive Members Umer Hussain Malik, Abbas Hashmi, Mohammad Israr Mishwani, Shahid Abbasi, Syed Imran Bukhari, Rana Istikhar Ali Khan, Mazhar Hussain, Mohammad Nauman, Muhammad Arif, Muhammad Fawad Sehgal, Mohammad Khurshid, Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, Malik Rashid Tufail, Ms. Nageena Khaleeqe and other members of the business community.

Gilani for steps to boost
Pakistan–Tanzania ties

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, during his meeting with Mussa Azzan Zungu, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, on the sidelines of the 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Arusha on Wednesday, proposed concrete measures to strengthen Pakistan–Tanzania relations, with a focus on diplomatic presence, trade, technology and parliamentary cooperation.

The Chairman of the Senate called for the establishment of a resident Tanzanian diplomatic mission in Islamabad, noting that a permanent diplomatic presence would strengthen bilateral engagement while facilitating visas, business travel, tourism and greater people-to-people interaction. He also stressed the need to substantially enhance bilateral trade and investment, including stronger linkages between the ports, business communities and chambers of commerce of the two countries. He highlighted the potential for cooperation in information technology, digital innovation, agriculture, education and skills development, and encouraged greater private-sector engagement to translate the goodwill between Pakistan and Tanzania into tangible economic cooperation. As another concrete step, the Chairman Senate called for the activation and strengthening of Parliamentary Friendship Groups in both countries, with regular parliamentary exchanges and closer institutional cooperation between the Senate of Pakistan and the National Assembly of Tanzania. The Chairman of the Senate also welcomed greater cooperation in education, including scholarships and academic exchanges for Tanzanian students, and emphasised the importance of building stronger links between the youth and educational institutions of the two countries. He congratulated Mussa Azzan Zungu, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, on the successful hosting of the 153rd IPU Assembly in Arusha, and appreciated Tanzania's role in bringing parliamentarians from across the world together to advance dialogue, parliamentary diplomacy and international cooperation. The Chairman of the Senate said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Tanzania and the wider African continent, and stressed that the next phase of Pakistan–Tanzania relations should be driven by trade, technology, parliamentary diplomacy and stronger people-to-people connectivity.—DNA

Doctors
require
licence

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination has directed registered medical practitioners (RMPs) operating in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to obtain a valid Drug Sale Licence (DSL) for running pharmacies or medical stores. According to an advisory issued by the Pharmacy Services and Drug Control (PS&DC), unlicensed pharmacies and medical stores have been directed to immediately apply for the requisite licence to avoid legal action. The advisory was issued in the light of a recent Federal Constitution Court (FCC) decision. The advisory clarified that medicines kept in doctors' clinics for their own patients would remain exempt from the licensing requirement, provided the facility did not fall within the category of a commercial pharmacy or medical store. Drug distributors have also been directed not to supply medicines to any unlicensed pharmacy or medical store. The Pakistan Pharmacists Association (PPA) welcomed the decision, describing it as a long-awaited measure to ensure that medicines are sold only through legally licensed outlets. The association said the decision would help strengthen patient safety, improve regulatory compliance and promote responsible medicine distribution. It is pertinent to mention that the advisory follows the recent Federal Constitutional Court ruling that while a registered

doctor may prescribe and dispense medicines to their own patients, operating a medical store or retail drug outlet requires a valid licence under the Drugs Act, 1976. The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) has ruled that registered doctors may prescribe and dispense medicines to their own patients but cannot operate a medical store or retail drug outlet without a valid licence under the Drugs Act, 1976. The ruling came in an appeal filed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department against an order of the Peshawar High Court, Dera Ismail Khan Bench, which had halted proceedings against doctors accused of storing and selling medicines without the required licence.

A two-member bench set aside the High Court order and allowed the legal proceedings against the doctors to continue in accordance with law. The court observed that registration as a medical practitioner and registration under the Pharmacy Act serve different legal purposes, and a doctor's registration does not exempt them from the licensing requirements of the Drugs Act. The judgment clarified that the Pharmacy Act, 1967 permits a registered medical practitioner to dispense medicines to their own patients or fulfil their own prescriptions, but does not authorize the establishment of a medical store or commercial sale of medicines. The court further held that Section 23(1)(c) of the Drugs Act prohibits the sale of medicines without a valid licence and provides no special exemption for registered doctors operating commercial drug outlets. The ruling also upheld the authority of drug inspectors to inspect premises, collect samples, conduct searches and seize medicines in accordance with the relevant provisions of the law. The FCC observed that intervention by the High Court at the show-cause stage was premature and directed that the matter proceed in accordance with law. The decision is expected to strengthen regulatory oversight of medicine sales and reinforce patient safety by ensuring that commercial drug outlets operate under the prescribed licensing framework.—DNA

PNS Yarmook seizes large
cache of narcotics worth \$96m

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Yarmook, while deployed in the Arabian Sea, conducted two successful counter-narcotics operations at extended ranges from Pakistani coast, resulting in successful seizure of a large cache of narcotics worth \$ 96 million. During the operations, two dhows were intercepted, and approximately 850 kg of Ice and 2000 kg of Hashish/ Cannabis were recovered from concealed compartments inside the vessels, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). The seized narcotics, valued at approximately US\$ 96 million, were taken into custody and will subsequently be handed over to concerned authorities for further disposal and legal proceedings. These successful operations reflect Pakistan Navy's sustained presence, vigilance, and unwavering commitment to regional maritime security and the

fight against illicit trafficking at sea. Moreover, President Asif Ali Zardari, Wednesday, commended Pakistan Navy for its successful anti-narcotics operations in the Arabian Sea. The president extended his congratulations to the Pakistan Navy; its officers and personnel for two successful anti-narcotics operations conducted by PNS Yarmook, Pres-

ident Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. He also lauded the Navy's continuous surveillance, readiness, and unwavering commitment to countering illegal drug trafficking at sea. The president further highlighted the vital role of Pakistan Navy in curbing illicit maritime activities and safeguarding regional maritime security.—

Politics of
violence to be
rejected: Aleem

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications and President of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, Abdul Aleem Khan, has said that the country cannot afford any kind of political adventurism under the prevailing circumstances. He said that national security and peace would not be allowed to be sacrificed at the altar of political interests. He further said that Pakistan currently needs national unity, solidarity and responsible political conduct rather than confrontation and agitation. In a statement posted on X, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that political differences have their own place, but there can be no compromise on national security. In view of the present challenges facing the country, he said, the political leadership, particularly the opposition, must demonstrate political maturity and responsibility. He said that safeguarding democracy is not the responsibility of the Government alone; the opposition also has an equal responsibility in this regard. He added that the irresponsible political conduct of the opposition under the prevailing circumstances was incomprehensible. Abdul Aleem Khan said that Pakistan is currently facing internal and external threats, including terrorism and that national unity and solidarity are urgently needed in such circumstances. "The country is in a state of war and at such a critical time, prioritizing political interests over national interests is by no means appropriate," he said. The Minister said that the entire nation stands with the brave Armed Forces and Security Forces in the war against terrorism. He paid tributes to the Pakistan Army and Security Forces for their continued sacrifices for the defence, peace and security of the country. He said the great sacrifices of the martyrs demand that peace, stability and national unity be kept paramount under all circumstances. Abdul Aleem Khan said that the sacrifices of the brave soldiers in the fight against terrorism are a national asset that transcends all political interests. He said the entire nation salutes the martyrs and Ghazis who laid down their lives for the security of the homeland and stands with their families. He said that the challenges posed by internal and external threats could only be overcome through national unity. All political forces, despite their differences, must give priority to the broader national interest of Pakistan's security, peace and stability Aleem Khan said that the people want peace, stability and development in the country. "The politics of arson, violence, vandalism, chaos and sit-ins is not in the national interest," he added. The people reject such irresponsible politics that causes damage to the national economy, law and order and national cohesion. Abdul Aleem Khan said that the need of the hour is for all political forces to keep their differences within the democratic and constitutional framework and jointly confront the challenges facing the country. He stressed that the entire nation must unite and fulfill its responsibility to safeguard Pakistan's security, sovereignty and peace.—DNA

Appeal
against death
sentence
dismissed

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed an appeal filed by convict Qaiser Ayub against his death sentence in a case involving the uploading of blasphemous content on social media. A bench headed by Justice Hashim Khan Kakar heard the case. The complainant, Muhammad Saeed, had registered a case against the two accused in Talagang, alleging that they had uploaded blasphemous content on social media. The co-accused, Amoon, was acquitted for lack of evidence, while Qaiser Ayub was sentenced to death. Qaiser Ayub had approached the Supreme Court challenging the death sentence. After hearing the case, the Supreme Court dismissed his appeal against the death sentence.—APP

PMDC
reschedules
NRE Step-I
exam

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has rescheduled the National Registration Examination (NRE) Step-I from October 11 to November 8, 2026.

According to a notification issued by the PMDC Examination Department, the examination was postponed due to unavoidable circumstances. The NRE is conducted for Pakistani medical and dental graduates who have qualified abroad as part of the registration process in Pakistan. The council advised candidates to take note of the revised examination date and follow further instructions issued by the examination department.—APP

IGP honours
cops for
dedicated
public service

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry honoured police officers for their dedicated service in protecting the lives and property of citizens. A police spokesperson told APP on Wednesday that the IGP invited the officers to his office, appreciated their performance and awarded them commendation certificates. The IGP Sohail said officers who perform their duties with dedication and consider public service a responsibility and an act of devotion deserve recognition and encouragement.—APP

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Dengue and the Cost of Waiting

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

THERE is a familiar weakness in the human character; we are often more comfortable responding to danger than preparing for it. We wait for the storm before repairing the roof, for the illness before changing our habits, and for the crisis before asking why we were not prepared. Nations, however, cannot afford to live by such habits. The measure of a responsible society is not how vigorously it responds to a disaster, but how wisely it prepares to prevent one. Pakistan's recurring struggle with dengue is a painful illustration of this failure of foresight. We are not unfamiliar with dengue. It has visited our cities repeatedly, filled our hospitals, disrupted families and claimed lives. We know its season, its breeding habits and the environmental conditions that allow it to flourish. We know what needs to be done. We have action plans, surveillance systems, health advisories, standard operating procedures and years of experience. Yet, almost every year, we seem to rediscover the disease as though it were an unexpected visitor.

Dengue transmission may occur throughout the year, but its threat normally intensifies after the monsoon, particularly from September to November and sometimes into early December. The rains of July and August leave behind the very environment in which the Aedes mosquito thrives; stagnant water in discarded tyres, flowerpots, coolers, containers, refrigerator trays and neglected corners of homes and streets. Warm temperatures, high humidity and residual rainfall provide the mosquito with an ideal breeding ground. None of this is a secret. Weather and health authorities routinely issue warnings before the high-risk period. The real question, therefore, is not whether Pakistan knows about dengue. It is why knowledge so often fails to become timely action. Our greatest weakness is the culture of reaction. When cases are few, dengue receives little attention. When the numbers begin to rise, meetings are convened. When hospitals become crowded, campaigns begin. When television screens show patients and worried families, fogging machines appear on the streets. By then, however, the mosquito has already completed much of its work.

Fogging may have a place in outbreak control, but it cannot become a substitute for prevention. A cloud of insecticide cannot repair a broken drainage system. It cannot remove the discarded tyre lying behind a house or empty the water accumulated in a neglected container. Nor can it replace the daily vigilance of households and communities. Pakistan has demonstrated that dengue can be controlled when institutions work together with determination. Yet one of our persistent national problems is that institutional memory often disappears with the passing of the

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crisis. Once winter arrives and mosquito activity declines, the urgency fades. Teams are reduced, campaigns lose momentum and attention turns elsewhere. The next monsoon then finds us preparing once again for a problem we should have been preparing for all along. The responsibility, however, does not rest with government alone. The state must provide leadership, surveillance, sanitation, drainage, waste management and hospital preparedness. But no government can inspect every household every morning. Dengue prevention begins at the doorstep. An uncovered water container may be insignificant to the eye but sufficient for mosquitoes to multiply. A flowerpot, a cooler, an abandoned tyre or a blocked drain can become a small factory of disease.

This is why public participation is not an optional addition to dengue control; it is its foundation. Families must keep their surroundings clean and dry, cover water containers, remove objects that collect rainwater and cooperate with health and municipal teams. Personal protection also matters; appropriate clothing, mosquito repellents, screens and nets can reduce exposure, particularly because Aedes mosquitoes are active mainly during daylight hours.

But public responsibility must be matched by institutional responsibility. Citizens cannot be asked to eliminate breeding sites while municipalities tolerate overflowing waste and stagnant drains. Health departments cannot be expected to carry the entire burden of a problem rooted partly in urban planning, sanitation, water management and environmental neglect. This is where Pakistan's dengue policy needs a fundamental change. We need to stop treating dengue as a seasonal emergency and begin treating it as a permanent public-health challenge. Preparedness should start before the monsoon, not after the first wave of cases. District administrations should have clearly defined responsibilities, reliable data and measurable targets. Larval surveillance and elimination of breeding sites should receive greater attention than highly visible emergency operations. Weather warnings should trigger pre-agreed preventive measures rather than merely generate another advisory. Hospitals should prepare before their wards fill. Local governments should regard drainage and waste management not simply as municipal duties but as essential components of disease prevention. Climate variability and rapid urbanisation have made the challenge more serious. Expanding cities, inadequate drainage, unmanaged waste and changing weather patterns are creating new opportunities for mosquito-borne diseases. But these realities should compel us to improve our systems, not surrender to them.

There is also a deeper lesson here. Pakistan suffers from what might be called collective crisis amnesia. We remember tragedy while it is before our eyes and forget its lessons when the immediate danger disappears. A wiser nation does the opposite. It remembers yesterday's suffering while preparing for tomorrow's danger. We have neither the luxury nor the excuse to remain unprepared regarding dengue prevention. We know the enemy, we know its season and we know how to confront it. What is required now is not another emergency slogan, another committee or another round of belated fogging. What Pakistan needs is continuity, discipline and the political will to act before the crisis becomes visible. The real success will not be measured by how efficiently we treat dengue patients after an outbreak. It will be measured by how many patients never become patients at all. That is the test of preparedness. And that is the lesson we must finally learn.

Why Could We Not Preserve the Spirit of Brotherhood of October 8, 2005?

Muhammad Rafi



Political, social and regional divisions pulled us further apart. Personal, institutional and group interests increasingly overshadowed the national interest. We also forgot that crises do not belong to one class or one region. Inflation, unemployment, economic hardship and terrorism affect the whole society

THE morning of October 8, 2005, remains etched in my memory. I was sitting in the library of Faisal Mosque, Islamabad, reading a newspaper when I suddenly felt the earth shake. As I hurried out of the library, I saw a man falling down the steps of Faisal Mosque. Almost the entire office staff had gathered outside. None of us could imagine that, in those few moments, countless families had lost their loved ones. Soon, reports began arriving that a tower in Islamabad's F-10 sector had collapsed and that the old courts building in Muzaffarabad had also been destroyed. Telephone contact with Muzaffarabad was cut off, leaving us desperate to know whether our relatives were safe. That evening, Ali Bahadur called from Muzaffarabad and said that telephone service had been partially restored but the city had suffered massive destruction. Kamsar, where our extended family lived, was among the worst-affected areas. Roads leading from Muzaffarabad to Kamsar had been washed away in places, while landslides had blocked others. From Chehla Bandi to Kamsar, the landscape was filled with dust and devastation.

Then came the news that shattered me. My brother Muhammad Rafiq was critically injured, while my sister, Hafiza Naveeda, had died. Two children of my late uncle Abdul Qayum, Saddam and Rashida; Tair, son of my uncle Nasruddin; and Nazir and Ifat, children of my uncle Muhammad Mehboob, had also perished. According to locally received information, 296 people had died in Kamsar, with dozens more injured. Among the dead were my childhood friend Ishtiaq Butt, the mother of my grandmother's friend Raja Shehzad Khan, the wife of Master Shabbir Lone and the wife of Muhammad Azim Lone.

Then I learned that my other sister, Shakeela, had also been trapped under the collapsed school building with other children and was seriously injured. The Kohala Road was blocked, and there seemed to be no way to reach Muzaffarabad. At about 9 p.m., my colleague Muhammad Irfan called. After hearing about the situation, he said he planned to travel to Muzaffarabad via Abbottabad. I asked to accompany him, and he agreed. We had our pre-dinner meal in Haripur and continued towards Muzaffarabad in

the morning. Balakot was devastated. Our vehicle was among the early vehicles to cross the Lohar Gali road. Near Muzaffarabad, we saw rubble everywhere, injured people, bodies and desperate calls for help. Many people were carrying injured relatives on their shoulders to safer places. Beyond Gujrah, the road was blocked by debris, so we had to walk to Chehla Bandi. Despite the heat, exhaustion and fasting, we kept moving. There I met my younger brother Shah Nawaz and other cousins. Shabbir Bhai, who had come from Kamsar, told me that Rafiq Bhai was seriously injured, our father was deeply distressed and medicines were urgently needed. I returned to Gujrah, obtained the required medicines and also met BBC correspondent Zulfiqar at the University Ground, informing him about the situation. The courtyard of CMH Muzaffarabad was filled with bodies, while the university ground was crowded with injured people. Helicopters were transporting critically injured victims to hospitals, while Pakistan Army officers and soldiers were engaged in rescue and relief operations. At the Gujrah helipad, Major General Rashid Qureshi was supervising the relief operation.

By evening, I finally reached Kamsar. The entire area had been reduced to rubble. Raja Nisar Bhai was dressing the wounds of survivors on his own. In several places, three or four people had been buried together in mass graves, while some bodies were still trapped beneath the debris. The scale of the tragedy became clearer with the official figures. The October 8 earthquake measured 7.6 on the Richter scale. According to Pakistani official records, 73,338 people were killed and 69,412 seriously injured, while around 3.3 million people were left homeless. Nearly 400,000 houses, hundreds of health facilities and around 6,000 schools and colleges were destroyed or badly damaged. Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Balakot, Mansehra, Battagram and many other areas were devastated. The United Nations and many countries provided search-and-rescue teams, medical supplies, food, tents and other essential assistance. Turkey, China, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Russia were among those

contributing to relief efforts, while the Red Cross and Red Crescent, OIC, NATO and numerous organizations played roles in relief and recovery.

Yet the brightest aspect of the tragedy was the spirit of brotherhood shown by the people of Pakistan. From every city and every section of society, people came forward to help their Kashmiri brothers and sisters. Some donated blood, others food, tents, vehicles or their savings. Young people, religious scholars, students, traders, journalists, political and social workers and ordinary citizens stood together for one purpose.

But this raises a painful question: Why could we not preserve that spirit of brotherhood?

Perhaps one major reason is that, with time, our collective sense of responsibility weakened while individual and group interests became stronger. In 2005, we faced a shared national tragedy. The earthquake temporarily erased many social and economic divisions. Every person felt that the suffering of an affected family was his or her own suffering. As normal life returned, however, that collective feeling gradually faded.

Political, social and regional divisions pulled us further apart. Personal, institutional and group interests increasingly overshadowed the national interest. We also forgot that crises do not belong to one class or one region. Inflation, unemployment, economic hardship and terrorism affect the whole society. The lesson of 2005 is that a nation does not become strong merely by standing together during a disaster. True strength lies in making unity, sacrifice and empathy part of everyday life. We do not have to eliminate our differences; we must learn to rise above them whenever the national interest demands unity.

If the state, institutions, business community, youth and ordinary citizens once again support one another with the same sense of responsibility, we can confront economic hardship, fight terrorism and move towards national development. October 8 taught us that earthquakes can shake the ground, but they cannot break the spirit of a united nation. The real question is: Are we ready to make that lesson part of our collective life once again?

The American Presidency's Missing Guardrails

Qamar Bashir



Trump's references to a third term must be treated seriously. Extraordinary ideas are often introduced as jokes or trial balloons, then repeated until resistance weakens. If Republicans hypothetically secured two-thirds of both houses, Trump would not hesitate to propose an amendment creating a third-term route, perhaps by distinguishing consecutive from nonconsecutive terms. Ratification by three-fourths of the states would remain necessary, but the Twenty-Second Amendment must be actively defended

THE United States is a wonderful country with enduring traditions, powerful institutions and a strong practical constitution. Yet that system contains a dangerous contradiction. It gives one individual command of the world's most powerful military and sole authority to authorize nuclear force, but demands almost nothing about physical, mental or moral fitness beyond age, citizenship and residency. The president is the face of the nation and an example whom millions admire, imitate and defend. Conduct affecting only a few people when committed by an ordinary citizen can reshape national standards when excused in the White House. If dishonesty, sexual misconduct or contempt for law is tolerated in the president, followers may conclude that the same behaviour is acceptable. Bill Clinton's relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky demonstrated this danger. The issue was not confined to whether a relationship between adults was criminal. The president conducted it with a young subordinate inside the institution representing American dignity, then gave false and misleading testimony in the Paula Jones lawsuit.

Clinton was impeached but acquitted and completed his term. He was later held in civil contempt, accepted a five-year suspension of his law licence and paid financial penalties. An ordinary citizen who lied under oath or obstructed justice could face prosecution and imprisonment; presidential power converted Clinton's misconduct into a partisan argument over removal. Donald Trump presents a broader test. His social relationship with Jeffrey Epstein is documented through photographs, statements and travel records. A prosecutor's email released by the Justice Department said Trump flew on Epstein's aircraft eight times during the 1990s. The releases also contain grave allegations that Trump denies and that remain unproven. Appearance in a file is not proof of crime, but it does not end the constitutional question.

When allegations concern the president, agencies holding the evidence are led by his appointees within an executive branch he controls. Even honest officials operate under an unavoidable conflict of interest, while citizens may fear that evidence can be delayed, discredited or withheld. The answer is neither automatic conviction nor blind acceptance of presidential denials, but investigation structurally independent of the president. Trump's adjudicated cases make the problem clearer. A civil jury found him liable for sexually abusing and defaming E. Jean Carroll. A New York jury convicted him on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records, although his appeal continues. He nevertheless returned to the presidency.

Richard Nixon participated in the Watergate cover-up, resigned and received a pardon preventing federal prosecution. Warren Harding's affairs and hush-money arrangements became public while corruption surrounded his administration. These cases show how party loyalty and executive power separate presidential consequences from those confronting ordinary citizens. Physical and mental incapacity reveal the same institutional weakness. James Garfield performed almost no official work for 79 days after being shot, while the

government operated largely on autopilot.

Grover Cleveland secretly underwent cancer surgery without informing his vice president or most of his Cabinet. Woodrow Wilson remained president after a devastating stroke left him partially paralyzed and isolated, while his wife, physician and secretary controlled access to him. Franklin Roosevelt's grave cardiovascular condition was concealed while he sought a fourth term. The Twenty-Fifth Amendment improved the Constitution but did not eliminate the conflict. Its involuntary mechanism depends upon the vice president and Cabinet—political associates and appointees—declaring the president unable to serve. Section Four has never been invoked. Joe Biden's visible decline became politically undeniable during the 2024 campaign, yet party pressure, not an independent examination, ended his campaign. Trump's rambling speeches about Iranian "drug factories" and Iran "taking out" Los Angeles and San Diego similarly demand transparent examination rather than reassurance from his staff.

The impeachment mechanism is equally vulnerable to party loyalty. Removal requires a two-thirds Senate vote. Andrew Johnson escaped conviction by one vote. Clinton was acquitted. Trump was impeached twice and acquitted twice, even when 57 senators supported conviction after January 6. A president protected by a sufficiently loyal party can therefore survive evidence or conduct that would end the career of almost any ordinary public employee.

Trump's references to a third term must be treated seriously. Extraordinary ideas are often introduced as jokes or trial balloons, then repeated until resistance weakens. If Republicans hypothetically secured two-thirds of both houses, Trump would not hesitate to propose an amendment creating a third-term route, perhaps by distinguishing consecutive from nonconsecutive terms. Ratification by three-fourths of the states would remain necessary, but the Twenty-Second Amendment must be actively defended. America's system also displays great strength. Local democracy can protect an amplified azan under the same rules governing church bells and other religious announcements. Voters can elect leaders such as New York Mayor Zohran Mandani and nominate Michigan Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed despite intense religious and political opposition. Administrations can reverse policies through elections, allowing democratic correction far more quickly than a hereditary monarchy. These achievements demonstrate that reforming presidential accountability would strengthen, not weaken, the constitutional order.

The country needs an independent Presidential Integrity and Capacity Commission established by constitutional amendment. Its existence, authority and independence must derive directly from the Constitution, with protected funding, secure tenure and enforceable investigative powers. Neither the president nor a congressional majority should be able to dissolve it, dismiss its investigators or prevent it from carrying out its constitutional duties. The commission should include judges, physicians and con-

stitutional experts, selected through a balanced appointment process that prevents domination by any president or political party. Its mandate should cover presidential capacity, serious dishonesty under oath, corruption and abuse of office, and serious criminal misconduct, including sexual abuse and obstruction of justice. It should conduct regular assessments of capacity and investigate credible, evidence-supported allegations within these defined areas. It must not become a morality police empowered to punish unpopular opinions, political disagreements or ordinary human failings.

The commission should preserve evidence, publish substantiated findings with appropriate protections for victims and sensitive information, and submit its evidence to the House of Representatives and the Senate. The House would determine whether to impeach, and the Senate would determine whether to convict and remove. Findings of incapacity should follow a separately defined constitutional procedure, because inability to perform presidential duties is distinct from impeachable misconduct.

Yet independent evidence gathering alone cannot resolve the danger of partisan protection. A congressional majority may refuse to act even when compelling evidence exists. If the proposed reform is intended to prevent that failure from leaving a president beyond effective accountability, the amendment must expressly establish an additional, narrowly defined judicial mechanism.

That mechanism should permit an independent constitutional tribunal to hear qualifying cases and order the remedies—including suspension or removal—specifically authorized by the amendment, under rigorous evidentiary standards and with a right of review. Such authority cannot be assumed merely because the commission operates under judicial oversight. At the same time, the amendment must prohibit presidential interference with investigators, destruction or suppression of records, and self-pardons for conduct under examination. Presidential power must never become a shield that prevents evidence from being discovered or accountability from taking place.

The presidency magnifies character. A president's words and conduct influence the ethical atmosphere of the entire country, legitimize behaviour for followers and shape how the world understands America. This higher standard is not an attack on democratic choice; it protects voters from deception and prevents temporary occupants of office from using public power to conceal private wrongdoing or incapacity. The republic therefore cannot demand less integrity from its most powerful citizen than it demands from everyone else. The president must be not only legally qualified to occupy the office, but physically capable, mentally sound and morally worthy of the example the office inevitably creates.

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

Briefs

Doors for talks with the PTI...

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the negotiations, saying that he had changed the draft of the agreement despite what had been agreed to earlier. However, PTI leaders, presenting the opposition's stance on the failed talks, declared that reconciliation with the government was not possible without including incarcerated party founder Imran Khan in the dialogue process. They said that another reason for the failure of the talks was that the government was not willing to pursue a collective strategy against terrorism. The prime minister's adviser on Wednesday contended that the PTI's stance that it was being left out of decisions concerning the Centre's counterterrorism policy was "completely wrong" and "misleading". He added that the reasons for the deadlock in talks had been misinterpreted. "The policy on countering terrorism is already being acted upon," Sanaullah noted, referring to intelligence-based operations (IBOs) being carried out on a daily basis with "huge success". He went on to claim that the PTI was against such IBOs. In June 2024, the government announced a reinvigorated "Operation Azm-i-Istehkam" but, following criticism, clarified soon after that it would only entail intensifying ongoing IBOs and rebranded it as "Vision Azm-i-Istehkam". Sanaullah pointed out that the armed forces and law enforcement agencies have been sacrificing their lives to keep the operations going.

Field Marshal reaffirms...

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regional security environment and the UN's role in promoting international peace and security were discussed," it said. "The two sides exchanged views on regional stability, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, India's abeyance of the Indus Waters Treaty and terrorism emanating from Afghanistan," it added. During the meeting, CDF Munir also reaffirmed "Pakistan's commitment to international peace and highlighted its contributions to UN peacekeeping missions". He also lauded the UN's role in "advancing peace, stability and humanitarian cooperation". According to ISPR, the UN secretary general paid tribute to the sacrifices and contributions of Pakistan and its armed forces in the war against terror and in UN peacekeeping missions. "He also acknowledged Pakistan's continued commitment to international peace and security," ISPR said, adding that Guterres specifically appreciated "Pakistan's efforts towards the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts".

PM Shehbaz directs acceleration of ML-1...

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"Modernising ML-1 is of key importance for the development of Pakistan Railways, improving passenger services and increasing freight transport," he was quoted as saying. The prime minister directed that ML-1 be developed on a commercial basis by utilising identified railway land worth billions of rupees. "The real commercial potential of railway properties needs to be harnessed," he said, calling for the effective use of valuable railway land for commercial purposes to contribute to the national economy and the development of Pakistan Railways. He said corporate-style reforms to strengthen the railways and make it economically self-sufficient were among the government's priorities. He added that the railway minister was working to make the organisation profitable and improve its operations. PM Shehbaz, during the meeting, approved securing bank financing through commercial projects on railway land and utilising the funds for the project.

Mayor of Türkiye's secular stronghold Izmir joins Erdogan's party

Erdogan's AKP suffered a major electoral blow in the March 2024 mayoral elections but since then Turkish authorities have launched an unprecedented crackdown on opposition municipalities that saw many mayors targeted with corruption charges that critics say are unfounded

ANKARA: The mayor of Izmir, Türkiye's third-largest city and a bastion of its secular opposition, joined President Tayyip Erdogan's ruling AK Party (AKP) on Wednesday, amid a crackdown on the opposition in which dozens of mayors have been jailed. Cemil Tugay, elected mayor in 2024 as a candidate of the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) before quitting in June, formally joined the AKP at a ceremony in Ankara, handing Erdogan's party the majority of a city it has never managed to win at the ballot box. "I have no doubt that, with harmony between the local administration and central government, we will achieve great things," Tugay said. The move is a significant symbolic gain for Erdogan's party in the western coastal city, long regarded as the heart-

land of Türkiye's secular, social democratic opposition. The religiously and socially conservative AKP, founded by Erdogan in 2001, has never won the Izmir metropolitan municipality despite dominating national politics for more than two decades. Tugay won the March 2024 election with 49 percent of the vote, against 37 percent for the AKP candidate. The CHP also won 28 of Izmir's 30 district municipalities. Many mayors are in jail awaiting trial. Erdogan's AKP suffered a major electoral blow in the March 2024 mayoral elections but since then Turkish authorities have launched an unprecedented crackdown on opposition municipalities that saw many mayors targeted with corruption charges that critics say are unfounded. Dozens of mayors, including Istanbul's

Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, who is seen as Erdogan's main rival, are in jail pending trial. Tunc Soyer, who was the Izmir mayor before Tugay, is also among those jailed as part of a corruption probe. The opposition has rejected the corruption accusations and says the investigations are politically motivated. The government says the judiciary is independent. Tugay resigned from the CHP in June after a court ruling that annulled the CHP 2023 congress and stripped Ozgur Ozel of his title as CHP chairman. However, he did not join the New Party founded by Ozel and 90 opposition MPs in protest over the court ruling and continued as an independent mayor. Ozel accused the AKP on Tuesday of using blackmail and the threat of imprisonment to pressure Tugay into defecting.

"Those who refuse to bow to this pressure ... and do not betray their friends or their party will remain our brothers until the day we die. Those who sell out and leave are genuine traitors," Ozel told his party's parliamentary group. Erdogan rejected such accusations at Wednesday's ceremony. "Those who want to serve their cities in peace see the AK Party as the safest address," Erdogan said. "This is the reason for the growing support for the AK Party. Any suggestion otherwise is slander and speculation." Tugay is the second mayor of a large city to defect to the AKP from the CHP, after Ozlem Cercioglu, mayor of Aydin, another western coastal city. Dozens of district mayors elected from opposition parties in 2024 have also joined the AKP since then. - APP

Beautiful': Saudi players share pride and joy after Gulf Cup triumph

DNA

DUBAI: Saudi national team forward Firas Al-Buraikan has expressed his pride at winning the 2026 Arabian Gulf Cup and said that the Green Falcons have plans to achieve greater success. Saudi Arabia defeated the UAE 2-0 on Tuesday night at Jeddah's Al-Inma Stadium to claim a first title in the cup since 2004. "Representing your country's national team is an honor and a source of pride, and we in the future will be better," Al-Buraikan told Asharq Al-Awsat.

The tournament's joint top scorer with three goals spoke of the challenges the team faced and said the players are now looking forward to the 2027 AFC Asian Cup, which will also be held in the Kingdom. "The entire tournament was difficult, but we made it easier. Everyone aspired to achieve it, and we succeeded in doing that, and we still have another tournament ahead of us that we are striving for, God willing." When asked about his most cherished goal in the tournament, Al-Buraikan initially chose his goal against Oman, before changing his answer with a smile and saying: "I tell you ... the tournament is the most beautiful." Meanwhile, Saudi defender Nawaf Boushal revealed that winning the Gulf Cup holds a different value for him than other titles he has achieved during his career. "When you bring joy to your country, it's a different story. Thank God, the Saudi people deserve this great joy, and God willing,

this will be the beginning of good things to come, and the future will be even better," he told Asharq Al-Awsat. The title ended a long wait for a generation of Saudi fans to claim a regional or continental title. "The previous generations of players did not fall short, but success was not written for them," Boushal said. "God has written success for us, and we have contributed to making an entire nation happy, and God willing, this will be the beginning of good things." Boushal added that the desire to win the title was clear among the players since the start of their training camp ahead of the tournament. "From the first day we came to the camp, our focus and goal were clear; to reach the final and win the cup. We did not come just

to participate, especially since the tournament is being held on our home ground and among our fans. "The focus was high, and we set winning the championship as our goal from the beginning, especially since we had been away from winning championships and from making our fans happy for a long time, and thank God that God has honored us today." The defender also had special praise for Greek head coach Georgios Donis and his staff. "Donis is a great coach, and he brought great joy to the people. He has experience in Saudi Arabia, knows the players and knows us well. He gave us confidence, as did the technical and medical staff, and all the officials in the national team. No one fell short with us," he said.

Australia prepare for first test in South Africa since 'Sandpapergate'

DNA

THE tourists efforts to roughen up the ball using sandpaper, and aid reverse swing, in Cape Town in March 2018 were caught on camera and led to a major reckoning for the game in Australia, with captain Steve Smith among those banned for their role in the subterfuge. South Africa have played tests in Australia since Sandpapergate, and Australia have toured South Africa in the interim for limited-overs internationals. The scandal has attracted little media focus in South Africa over recent weeks in comparison to the attention devoted to the incident in the Australian press. After dethroning Australia last year in a thrilling World Test Championship final at Lords to win a first major title, South Africa are focused on improving their chances of a return to the final at the end of the 2025/27 WTC cycle. Australia are also in need of a boost after a surprise home test defeat by Bangladesh in August and with an Ashes tour to England starting next June. The pitch at Kingsmead often proves a fickle track but should offer the spinners a chance to play a leading role in a change from South Africa's usually seamer-friendly surfaces. It is unusual for South Africa's chances to be largely entrusted to their spin attack, but Simon Harmer and Keshav Maharaj wreaked havoc in India last November when they triumphed in their last two test outings.

Former Pakistan U-19 captain Hassan Khan handed maiden USA call-up

DNA

THE left-arm spinning all-rounder has replaced fast bowler Ali Khan, who has been ruled out with a hamstring injury. Hassan, who turns 28 on October 16, will make his first senior international appearance nearly a decade after leading Pakistan at the 2018 Under-19 World Cup. That squad also featured future Pakistan internationals Shaheen Shah Afridi and Musa Khan. Once regarded as one of Pakistan's promising young cricketers, Hassan saw his opportunities at home limited after making sporadic appearances in the Pakistan Super League. He subsequently moved to the United States, where he rebuilt his career through Major League Cricket. Playing for the San Francisco Unicorns in the 2024 MLC season, Hassan scored 204 runs at an average of 40.80 and a strike rate of 143.66, besides taking 10 wickets. He continued his strong form in the 2025 season, scoring 225 runs at a strike rate of 187.50 and hitting 17 sixes. Across the two MLC seasons, he accumulated 429 runs from 262 balls, including 30 sixes. His performances also earned him opportunities in the Big Bash League, ILT20 and Caribbean Premier League. Hassan returned to the PSL in 2026 with Hyderabad Kingsmen, scoring 139 runs in eight innings at a strike rate of 195.77, with a highest score of 33 not out. He also claimed six wickets during the tournament.

Israel army destroys memorials to Palestinians on October 7 anniversary

DNA

ISRAEL'S military destroyed on Wednesday memorials across the West Bank to Palestinians accused of killing Israelis or who died in clashes, on the third anniversary of Hamas's October 7 attack, the army and local officials said. The military took action across the occupied West Bank "to destroy monuments to terrorists," an army spokesperson told AFP, without explicitly connecting the move to the anniversary of Gaza-based Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel.

NZ Cricket defends decision to launch domestic T20 competition

AFTER NZC announced in March that NZ20 would replace the existing Super Smash provincial competition, cricket great Richard Hadlee and former NZC President Lesley Murdoch criticised what they said was a lack of transparency in the process and the body's refusal to share the Deloitte report with stakeholders. NZC Chair Diana Puketapu-Lyndon said the governing body should have done a better job explaining the decision when it announced its plans. The Deloitte report was just one of four expert reports considered by the board in making the decision, alongside analyses of community cricket, high-performance pathways and fan engagement, she added. "Its analysis favoured exploring the Big Bash opportunity further, for reasons including financial upside and governance, but it also said weighing the options was for the board and encouraged us to continue exploring both options," Puketapu-Lyndon said in a statement. The board had also considered feed-

back from the country's six Major Associations and the New Zealand Cricket Players Association, both of which supported NZ20 ahead of seeking to put a New Zealand team in the established Australian league. "When all of that was considered, alongside the board's own due diligence, the board voted unanimously, 7-0, to support NZ20 as the preferred option," said Puketapu-Lyndon. NZC said it would not release the full report, citing confidentiality. "This is the biggest change to domestic cricket in a generation, and we know not everyone agrees with it," she said. "NZ20 is genuinely aspirational. It has the potential to revolutionise the game of cricket in this country and ensure a sustainable future from the grassroots to the elite." NZ20 organisers had initially planned to launch the six-team competition this summer but NZC postponed the tournament until the 2027-28 home season to allow more time to establish the privately owned franchise league and accommodate the international schedule. - DNA

Emotion, tears as Messi retires from Argentina national team

DNA

LIONEL Messi brought the curtain down on his 21-year international career on Tuesday, bidding farewell to adoring Argentina fans in an emotional final appearance for the former world champions in Buenos Aires. In a perfectly scripted finale, the 39-year-old widely regarded as the greatest football player in history signed off with his 126th international goal in front of 85,000 supporters as Argentina cruised to a 3-0 victory over Benin. Messi, playing in his record-extending 208th international, also provided the assist for the opening goal scored by veteran Nicolas Otamendi, with Nico Paz also scoring. But the match was a footnote to the occasion itself, which saw Messi savoring the adulation of the Monumental Stadium crowd one last time for an event which had been billed as 'The Last Tango'. "It was a huge source of pride for me to defend this jersey for more than 20 years," Messi told fans in a post-match address. "Not coming anymore is going to be deeply painful. I swear I'd like to play for the rest of my life, because playing for the Argentina national team is the most beautiful thing that can happen to you." Messi though said he had no regrets about his decision to retire, citing Argentina's grueling World Cup campaign, which took place as his late father was seriously ill, as a factor.

"Even though I want to be here all my life, I feel that this is the moment. The last World Cup was too much, everything I had to live through," said Messi. Beforehand, Messi wiped away tears as the bus carrying him and his Argentina team-mates made its way through crowds of wellwishers en route to the stadium. Messi took the field alongside his three children and received affectionate waves from his wife, Antonela Roccuzzo, and his mother, Celia Cuccitini, who were watching from a VIP box. Shortly before kick-off, a giant Argentina jersey bearing the word "Gracias" (Thank You) above the football superstar's No.10 was laid out on the pitch as the crowd roared their approval. Messi welled up again as Falklands War veteran Fabio Santana sang the national anthem beside a banner which read - "The Malvinas are Argentine" - the same banner held aloft by players after their 2-1 World Cup semi-final win over

England. The match was halted in the 10th minute - in tribute to Messi's famous shirt number - for a minute-long ovation to the former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain star. He crowned the occasion with a goal from the penalty spot in the 71st minute. At the final whistle a drone show lit up the night sky above the stadium, showing Messi's image the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner for his career. Messi's farewell came two and a half months after Argentina's World Cup final defeat to Spain in New Jersey, where Messi exited in tears after a little impression of an ill-tempered 1-0 loss. "I gave it my all; I have nothing left to give, and sides, there are young players coming up who deserve their chance," Messi wrote at the time. Before Tuesday's game, the University of Buenos Aires awarded Messi

an honorary doctorate in a ceremony at the Argentine Football Association (AFA) headquarters. Messi, who has in the past spoken of his regret at not studying more, expressed pride at the distinction. "To be able to say that I am an honorary doctor!" he joked. Outside the Argentina Football Association headquarters, fans unfurled a huge Argentine flag with his image inscribed "The joy of my life." Former Barcelona team-mate Neymar paid tribute to the departing champion on X. "It's not just Argentina that thanks you, the world thanks you for everything you did for football. Thank you for making me love football even more," he said. Messi remains under contract with Inter Miami until 2028, although following the death of his father, Jorge, two months ago, he revealed he may hang up his boots for good sooner than anticipated. Messi's departure comes four years after his greatest triumph in international football, leading Argentina to victory at the 2022 World Cup to end the country's 36-year wait for a third title, cementing his status as Diego Maradona's heir. "I believe Messi gave everything, absolutely everything, so it doesn't bother me at all that he's leaving. He has more than earned it, let him enjoy himself, let him rest," Cecilia Adriano, 52, told AFP. During his time with the Albiceleste, Argentina won one World Cup, were runners-up twice (Brazil 2014 and North America 2026) and were also crowned Copa America champions in 2021 and 2024.

Govt should not attach strings to...

FROM PAGE 01

jailed PTI founder Imran Khan and the release of arrested party leaders. According to Barrister Gohar, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had offered conditional negotiations, while the government was imposing restrictions on PTI. "We are political people, and political people sit down unconditionally," he said. Gohar confirmed that PTI was in contact with government members, emphasising that issues should be resolved through dialogue.

UN Secretary General calls on...

FROM PAGE 01

security during his tenure. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to an effective, inclusive and representative UN, particularly at a time when multilateralism faces significant challenges. He welcomed the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative and emphasized that UN reform should remain responsive to the priorities of developing countries, while strengthening conflict prevention, peaceful settlement of disputes, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's longstanding commitment to UN peacekeeping and its continued contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Prime Minister highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to promote dialogue and de-escalation, including its mediation role between the US and Iran. He reiterated that dialogue and diplomacy remains the only viable path to resolving disputes and preventing escalation. The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and stability and emphasized the need for a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. He highlighted that the Indus Waters Treaty is a binding international agreement and that India's unilateral decision to place it in abeyance has no legal basis.

Russia kills 11 in strikes on Ukraine

FROM PAGE 01

Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine's parliamentary commissioner for human rights, said on the Telegram app. "Another sleepless night, another act of terror, after which people still have to plan their working day despite everything," he added. Russia launched 130 drones, 48 cruise missiles and also ballistic missiles to attack Ukraine, the Ukrainian air force said. Air defence units downed 161 targets, it said on Telegram. Kyiv and Poltava in central Ukraine, and the southeastern region of Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv in the northeast were the focus of the Russian attacks, the Ukrainian air force said. missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine October 7, 2026.— Reuters Russia's defence ministry said its forces had carried out a "massive strike" on military-industrial facilities in Kyiv and other Ukrainian regions, using high-precision land, sea- and air-launched weapons, as well as drones.

Pak troops already...

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in Saudi Arabia as part of the Makkah alliance, the DG ISPR said the forces had been there for decades. "Pakistani troops have been there for decades [...] in Saudi Arabia," Lt Gen Chaudhry said. He said the Makkah alliance had not emerged "in a vacuum", pointing to the longstanding diplomatic, political, military and people-to-people ties between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. "So I can share with you that Pakistani troops, in multiple capabilities and domains, are already there," the DG ISPR said. The remarks come after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye agreed to immediately implement their collective defence commitments and ensure the "rapid deployment" of agreed military forces and capabilities in Saudi Arabia.

Briefs

PSX gains
120.30 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued its positive momentum on Wednesday, gaining 120.30 points, a positive change of 0.07 percent, to close at 168,580.41 points against 168,460.11 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 586.861 million shares, compared to 432.015 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs 22.365 billion from Rs 20.139 billion. Market capitalisation increased to Rs 18.747 trillion from Rs 18.712 trillion recorded a day earlier.

Out of 501 companies that traded in the ready market, 272 posted gains, 184 suffered losses, while 45 remained unchanged. K-Electric Ltd. led the volume chart with 82.659 million shares, followed by Energycio PK with 68.756 million shares and Pak Refinery with 44.141 million shares.

Among the top gainers, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited surged by Rs 440.02 to close at Rs 25,680.00, while Hoechst Pakistan Limited advanced by Rs 55.75 to settle at Rs 3,979.04.

On the losing side, Nestle Pakistan Limited declined by Rs 30.66 to close at Rs 6,995.19, while S.S.Oil Mills Limited fell by Rs 28.92 to Rs 401.66.

In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 174.910 million shares with a traded value of Rs 8.472 billion, compared with 125.121 million shares worth Rs 7.168 billion in the previous session. Of the 296 companies traded in the DFC market, 176 advanced, 115 declined and 5 remained unchanged.—APP

Rupee gains
03 paise
against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.02, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.05.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.45 and Rs 278.05, respectively.

The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 1.33, closing at Rs 310.09 against the previous day's rate of Rs 311.42, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged at Rs 1.75, and the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of 01 paise and closed at Rs 366.76 compared to the previous day's Rs 366.77. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 01 and 02 paise to close at Rs 75.42 and Rs 73.79, respectively.—APP

Gold prices
drop by
Rs3,100 to
Rs 434,436

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a sharp decline in the local market on Wednesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs3,100 to close at Rs434,436, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs2,658 to settle at Rs372,458, whereas the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold also dipped by Rs2,436, closing at Rs341,432. In the international market, the bullion price showed a downward trend, decreasing by \$31 to reach \$4,119 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola in the domestic market dropped by Rs100 to stand at Rs6,488, while the price of 10 grams of silver went down by Rs86 to close at Rs5,562.

The price of silver in the international market also recorded a decrease, falling by \$1.00 to settle at \$60.10 per ounce, the association added.—APP

Pak opens new avenue for
Russian agri tech coop

Discussions also covered micronutrients and alternative plant nutrition solutions that could improve nutrient-use efficiency and potentially reduce dependence on conventional fertilizers, particularly phosphorus fertilizers and DAP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain said on Wednesday that Pakistan seeks agricultural cooperation with Russia that goes beyond the import of finished products and leads to technology transfer, local production, joint research, breeding programmes and capacity building of Pakistani experts. The minister held a meeting with a delegation from the prominent Russian agricultural and agrochemical company, Schelkovo Agrohimi. The delegation was accompanied by the Second Secretary and other officials of the Russian Embassy, said a press release. The meeting focused on exploring practical cooperation between Pakistan and Russia in seed development, crop protection, pesticides, micronutrients, advanced fertilizers, agricultural research, technology transfer and investment. He said Pakistan needs advanced agricultural technologies and seeds that can enhance productivity while demonstrating greater resilience to drought, diseases, pests and climatic stresses. The Russian delegation briefed the Minister on Schelkovo Agrohimi's pesticides, advanced pesticide formulations, micronutrients, micro-fertilizers, biological products and high-quality seeds for various crops. The company also presented its research and production capabilities in seeds and hybrids of wheat, maize, sugar beet, rapeseed/canola and sorghum. According to the Russian delegation, the company's maize seeds are non-GMO. The meeting identified effective pest and disease management in cotton, rice, sugarcane and vegetables as



key areas for potential cooperation.

Discussions also covered micronutrients and alternative plant nutrition solutions that could improve nutrient-use efficiency and potentially reduce dependence on conventional fertilizers, particularly phosphorus fertilizers and DAP. Rana Tanveer Hussain said that climate change poses a growing challenge to Pakistan's agricultural production. Therefore, climate-resilient technologies, drought-tolerant seeds and disease-resistant crop varieties are being accorded priority. Discussing cooperation in the seed sector, Pakistani officials emphasized that future collaboration should not be limited to the import of finished seeds. Instead, practical cooperation could focus on access to suitable Russian germplasm, joint

breeding programmes, technology transfer, seed traceability, local seed multiplication, and the establishment of a Russian seed company or partnership in Pakistan. The Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) were proposed as key platforms for the scientific evaluation of Russian agricultural technologies under local conditions. The Federal Minister stressed that the performance of any new technology or product must be scientifically assessed under Pakistan's climatic, agronomic and soil conditions before its wider introduction. The meeting also explored the possibility of initiating field trials of Russian seeds and pesticide products in

Pakistan. Given the approaching wheat sowing season, the early provision of suitable Russian wheat seed material for trials was proposed. The trials would assess yield potential, local adaptability, resistance to pests and diseases, and performance under Pakistan's diverse climatic conditions. Cooperation in hybrid wheat and other advanced seed technologies was also discussed. Regarding pesticides, the meeting was informed that the Russian delegation had already held discussions with the Department of Plant Protection (DPP), where it was briefed on Pakistan's registration procedures, testing requirements, required studies and other regulatory requirements for pesticide products.

Hezbollah gets
\$200m from Iran
to help displaced

BEIRUT: Hezbollah has received \$200 million from Iran to help Lebanese displaced by this year's war with Israel, two people with direct knowledge of the transfer said, the first significant aid from the group to supporters who bore the brunt of the conflict. Hezbollah received the cash last month despite a tightening US economic chokehold on Iran and increasing difficulties in getting funds to Tehran's Lebanese ally, said the people. Intermediaries who moved the money charged a 20 percent fee, reflecting the risks of dealing with the group, they said. One said this was four times the normal fee. Asked for comment, a Hezbollah official said an amount had been secured and a plan for distributing it would be announced in the coming days, without elaborating on the source of the funds. The Iranian foreign ministry, Iran's permanent mission in Geneva, the US State Department and the Lebanese government did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Israel's bombardment and invasion of Lebanon uprooted hundreds of thousands of Hezbollah's Shi'ite Muslim constituents after the group entered the regional war in support of Iran on March 2. But those displaced have so far received little to no assistance from Hezbollah, an armed group founded by Iran's Revolutionary Guards in 1982 which has suffered heavy Israeli blows in two wars since 2024 and is designated a terrorist group by Washington. Hezbollah would use the funds to pay an initial \$3,000 per family, and priority will go to those whose villages have been destroyed or are inaccessible due to Israeli occupation, the sources said. These number around 50,000 families, one of the sources said. Iran has maintained financial support to Hezbollah through years of crippling US sanctions: it transferred \$1 billion to the group in the first 10 months of 2025, according to the US Treasury Department. Tehran has never acknowledged financing Hezbollah. Iran's policy of funding regional proxies has stirred domestic protester anger against the clerical rulers in the past and could prove particularly sensitive at a time of worsening hardship in Iran. Iran had promised Hezbollah more funding after Tehran signed an interim deal with Washington in June that allowed Iran to sell its oil. Reuters reported at the time. That agreement collapsed in July. Washington has since intensified economic pressure on Iran, tightening sanctions and imposing a naval blockade to block Iranian oil exports. Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem said in a speech last month that the group would soon contribute to a project aimed at housing thousands of people displaced by the war, using "available resources and donations", without elaborating. Hezbollah's ability to fund local services and provide post-conflict aid has helped shore up its support in the past. Following a war with Israel in 2006, the group immediately handed out large cash payments to those impacted and moved swiftly to help rebuild Beirut's southern suburbs, a stronghold. But this time there has been little sign of reconstruction. Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said last month that the total reconstruction costs from the two wars since 2024 could exceed \$27 billion.—APP

Oil gains as
US storm and
Houthi air
strikes threaten
supply

SINGAPORE: Oil prices climbed on Wednesday as the market weighed supply constraints from a storm heading for US oil-producing regions and attacks by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis on Saudi Arabia against increased supplies of Middle East crude. Brent futures rose 81 cents, or 0.8 percent, to \$101.39 a barrel by 09:35 a.m. Saudi time. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures gained 61 cents, or 0.7 percent, to \$90.05 a barrel. US forecasters said on Tuesday a storm forming in the Gulf of Mexico would become the first Atlantic hurricane of 2026 within two days and would likely hit oil and gas producing facilities. The offshore areas in the Gulf in the storm's path produce 15 percent of US crude oil and 5 percent of the country's natural gas. KCM Trade chief analyst Tim Waterer

said the storm was an "unwelcome complication for crude, raising the prospect of production and refining disruptions at a time when the market already has enough supply-side headaches." The storm could affect six refineries. Refineries in US Gulf states account for about 50 percent of the national capacity of 18.2 million barrels per day. US crude oil inventories fell last week, market sources said on Tuesday, citing data from the American Petroleum Institute. Crude stocks fell by 2.09 million barrels in the week ended Oct. 2. "For now, the market is likely to remain nervous to any potential supply disruptions," said ING commodity strategists, adding that supply risks from the Middle East are still very real amid continued attacks on ships. Supply has been recovering. Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline hit 5.8 million barrels a day, the Kingdom's energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, said on Tuesday. Around 12 million barrels per day of crude oil and 2 million bpd of refined products have left the Middle East on tankers in the last 7 to 10 days, the head of Vitol said. However, Saudi Arabia's airports in Jazan and Najran were targeted in two attacks on Monday evening, the Saudi aviation authority said, as hostilities between the Kingdom and Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis escalated. The attacks occurred as Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces pressed a major offensive to retake territory from the Houthis, after weeks of rebel advances, with Riyadh stepping up airstrikes in support of the campaign.—APP

Israeli fire kills Palestinian in
West Bank settler clash

NABLUS: A Palestinian man was killed and nine people were injured during an Israeli settler attack followed by army intervention in an occupied West Bank village on Wednesday, according to the mayor and the Palestinian health ministry. The Palestinian health ministry said 44-year-old Ali Al-Bazzari died and nine others were injured "as a result of an assault by occupation forces and settlers" on the village of Burqa, north of Nablus in the northern West Bank. The Israeli military said troops and border police forces had been dispatched to the area after reports of "rock hurling toward an Israeli civilian, who was injured." During an ensuing confrontation between dozens of Palestinians and Israeli settlers, "a security personnel member and an additional Israeli civilian opened fire" at the scene, the military said. "A commander operating in the area identified a terrorist running toward him while carrying a suspicious object and neutralized him," it added. Al-Bazzari was a member of the Palestinian National Security Forces, according to an obituary that it published on Wednesday. AFP photos from Rafidia Hospital in Nablus showed his sons, wife and mother mourning over his body, with his sons in tears. The incident occurred on the third anniversary of Hamas's October 7 attacks on Israel, which triggered the Gaza war. Violence has surged in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967, in the three years since. Wednesday's attack took place as farmers from Burqa were picking olives on land between the cities of Nablus and Tulkarem, according to village mayor Ammar Salah. "Clashes broke out between young men from the village and settlers before the (Israeli) occupation forces intervened and opened live fire at the Palestinians, killing the young man Al-Bazzari and injuring others," Salah told AFP. The Palestinian Red Crescent said in separate statements that its teams treated three people wounded by live fire, one of them seriously, and five people injured after being assaulted and beaten in Burqa, and transported the injured to hospitals. The organization added that Israeli forces "assaulted and beat ambulance crews" and detained staff as they tried to reach the wounded in the area. According to an AFP tally based on data from the Palestinian health ministry, Israeli forces or settlers have killed 1,115 Palestinians in the territory since the start of the Gaza war. Israeli figures show at least 49 Israelis, including civilians and security personnel, have been killed in Palestinian attacks or during Israeli military operations during the same period. Excluding east Jerusalem, around three million Palestinians live in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967, along with more than 500,000 Israelis living in settlements considered illegal under international law.—APP

Ahsan pushes district-level
reforms for human capital uplift

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday called for treating education, health, nutrition, clean water and population balance as a "national emergency", stressing greater devolution of authority to districts to ensure delivery of basic services at citizens' doorsteps.

He chaired the first meeting of the Human Capital and Skills Mission, the seventh of the 11 National Economic Missions under URAAN Pakistan, which reviewed Pakistan's standing in health, education, and skills against peer countries, mission targets, and a proposed federal-provincial delivery mechanism. "Where will Pakistan stand in 2047, when we complete one hundred years of independence? That is the decisive question before us today. Just as we won Marka-e-Haq, we must now win Marka-e-Taraqqi — the battle for development," he said.

The minister said Pakistan had prepared development plans many times, but political instability had repeatedly disrupted policy continuity. He stressed that continuity of policies and political stability were indispensable for putting the country on the path of development. "Investment in human resources and skills is the foundation of Pakistan's future development," he said. Ahsan Iqbal said social-sector challenges were more important than roads and buildings and must be addressed as a national emergency. "Pa-

kistan's literacy rate is 63 percent. With literacy at this level, we cannot develop at the speed we need," he said, adding that rapid population growth of 2.55 percent was a major challenge that could undermine economic progress. The meeting was informed that Pakistan ranked 168th among 193 countries on the Human Development Index, while its Human Capital Index score of 0.41 meant a child born today would attain only 41 percent of productive potential. Stunting stood at 40.2 percent, while maternal mortality was 186 per 100,000 live births. Around 26 million children, or 28 percent, are out of school, while only 46 out of every 100 children entering Class 1 in public schools reach Class 10. Female labour force participation stands at 22.7 percent against 68.7 percent for men, while about two million young people enter the labour force annually. The minister said the 18th Constitutional Amendment was intended to improve social sectors, but the desired results could not be achieved as authority was not transferred to lower tiers. "A single provincial secretary cannot effectively resolve the problems of an entire province. Authority must be transferred to local governments," he said. He called for empowered departments at district level and governance reforms in education, health and other social sectors, with provincial governments posting officers of the highest calibre in these departments. The minister stressed that the time for merely making plans was over and effective implementation must now be ensured.

"The job of the Ministry of Planning is to provide the

best evidence based planning. Implementation rests with the relevant departments and the provincial governments. Only the best planning combined with effective implementation can guarantee that we achieve our development goals," he said.

Under URAAN Pakistan, the mission targets include reducing maternal mortality by 35 percent and stunting and under-five mortality by 18 percent each, raising skilled birth attendance to 85 percent, increasing education spending to 4 percent of GDP, improving literacy by 10 percent, creating 1.5 million jobs annually and raising female labour force participation by 17 percent.

The meeting was informed that the targets would be broken down into annual, provincial and regional milestones, with population indicators also incorporated into the monitoring framework.

The proposed delivery mechanism would bring together federal and provincial stakeholders through working groups on education, health and population, skills and nutrition. The groups would meet every two weeks to resolve bottlenecks, align development spending and report progress to the Executive Committee.

"Achieving the targets of URAAN Pakistan's 11 National Economic Missions requires the same resolve and hard work that Pakistan demonstrated in completing its nuclear programme," Ahsan Iqbal said.

The meeting was attended by representatives of federal ministries and provincial departments dealing with health, education, planning and skills.

Humane,
digitized
approach
defines PM's
fuel subsidy
scheme

JEDDAH: Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's special fuel subsidy scheme has provided relief to the low-income segments of the population hit by rising prices as a result of tensions in the Middle East.

Mohammad Irfan, consul press and culture at the Pakistan Consulate in Jeddah, said rising global oil prices, driven by the situation in the Middle East, have affected countries like Pakistan, which rely on imported fuel. Under the special relief scheme, eligible owners of motorcycles, rickshaws and small cars — particularly those who depend on transport for income — are receiving petrol at subsidized rates. To benefit from the scheme, citizens have to register on a digital platform. Once applicants' details are verified, they receive a digital token with personal and vehicle details. The scheme, implemented under the direct supervision of the prime minister, aids the digitization of the economy by building a secure digital economic record of the country's low- and middle-income population. To raise awareness, Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting carried out a nationwide campaign across TV, radio, print and digital media to highlight how eligible citizens can benefit from the scheme. Irfan said the relief initiative has earned public appreciation at home and the attention of policymakers abroad.—APP

Seven
wounded in
Poland school
stabbing
attack

WARSAW: Officers have arrested a 19-year-old man after seven people were wounded in a knife attack at a high school in Poland, police said Wednesday.

The attack happened at a school in Ostroleka, 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of the capital Warsaw, said police, who released a blurred photo of the suspect following his arrest.

Ostroleka prosecutor Elzbieta Lukasiewicz said the victims were students and teachers. "It appears that the boy went into the school and attacked the students and teachers with a dangerous tool," Lukasiewicz told news channel TVN24. "Based on the information I have, eight people were injured." The fire department told the PAP news agency that the injured included three adults and five teenagers.—APP

France
suspends stun
grenade use
at student
protests

PARIS: France has suspended the use of stun grenades by police at student-led demonstrations, the interior minister said Wednesday, as allegations of police brutality mounted after days of sometimes violent demonstrations across the country. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets across France on Tuesday demanding better conditions in high schools, which prompted President Emmanuel Macron to hold an emergency meeting with Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu and other key ministers to find a way out of the crisis. Lecornu will make a public address later Wednesday on the school protests as well as the country's finances, his office said. Interior Minister Laurent Nunez meanwhile told radio broadcaster RTL early Wednesday that he had suspended the police's use of stun grenades at the protests. A 15-year-old lost a hand on Monday after police fired a stun grenade. And a 14-year-old student in northwest Paris was hit in the face with a tear gas grenade at such close range that he lost several teeth. A policeman was charged Tuesday over that incident. Police have opened 18 internal investigations into allegations of misconduct since the protests began, Nunez said. The protests started in late September with students blocking entrances to hundreds of high schools for 15- to 17-year-olds over complaints of dilapidated facilities and teacher shortages.—APP

Briefs

French-Japanese duo wins 2026 Nobel chemistry prize

DNA

OSLO: Scientists Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai won the 2026 Nobel Prize in Chemistry "for the discovery of non-linear effects and autocatalysis in asymmetric organic synthesis," the award-giving body said on Wednesday. The chemistry Nobel, always the third prize to be awarded during Nobel week, followed those for medicine and physics announced on Monday and Tuesday. "So this year's prize is about foundational chemistry. Many molecules occur in two different versions. Like my hands. They are one another's mirror image, they look alike, but they are not identical. I cannot put my hands on top of one another. Such molecules are called chiral, from the Greek word for hand," Heiner Linke, Chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, said. Established in the will of Swedish inventor and businessman Alfred Nobel, the prizes for achievements in science, literature and peace have been awarded since 1901, with a few interruptions mostly due to the world wars. Nobel, a chemist by trade, amassed huge wealth in the 19th century from inventions primarily tied to warfare, most notably dynamite.

SC dismisses Sindh govt's plea

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday rejected the Sindh government's petition seeking to revisit its June 10 decision overturning the convictions of two Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) workers for their alleged involvement in the deadly 2012 Baldia Town factory fire in Karachi. Over 260 workers, including 16 who could not be identified, were burnt alive when the multi-storey Ali Enterprises garment factory was set on fire in Baldia Town on Sept 11, 2012, in what became the deadliest industrial blaze in Pakistan's history. In June this year, the SC overturned the convictions of Abdul Rehman alias Bhola and Zubair alias Chariya on charges of murder, extortion, arson and terrorism, granting them the benefit of the doubt. - APP

Islamabad ATC indicts Imaan Mazari, husband Hadi Chattha in 2024 security breach case

Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra frames charges against two lawyers in a case registered at Aabpara Police Station

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad on Wednesday indicted lawyer and human rights activist Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, in a security breach case registered at Aabpara Police Station. Imaan and Hadi appeared before the court via video link, where ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra framed charges against the two lawyers for allegedly creating a security risk by interfering in state affairs during the visit of an international cricket team in October 2024, despite objections from the defence. During the hearing, Chattha objected that he had not yet received copies of the case documents. "I have not even received the copies yet," he told the court, arguing that the charges could not be framed until all legal requirements had been fulfilled. Defence counsel Zainab Janjua argued that neither Mazari nor Chattha had received the required copies and that the lawyers had not been allowed to meet them. "The court cannot frame charges without fulfilling all legal requirements," Janjua said. During the hearing, Judge Sipra told the defence lawyer that they could challenge the decision. The court also ordered that Mazari and Chattha be produced in person at the next hearing. Subsequently, the court adjourned the hearing until October 9. The lawyer couple has been in custody since their arrest on January 23 in a case registered against them over a protest outside the Islamabad High Court. A day later, a sessions court sentenced them to 17 years on multiple charges under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) in a case related to controversial social media posts. On September 17, following months of proceedings, the Supreme Court suspended the couple's sentences in a case related to controversial tweets and granted them bail against surety bonds worth Rs200,000 each, until the final decision on the case pending before the Islamabad High Court. However, the relief was short-lived. Hours later, Islamabad police arrested the couple again in connection with another case and produced them before an anti-terrorism court (ATC). According to the FIR, Mazari and her husband were accused of chanting anti-government slogans and blocking roads during a protest. - APP

UK Minister Doughty visits Pak to deepen cooperation

Reflecting on the visit, Doughty said the UK and Pakistan share deep and historic ties built on connections between people, businesses and institutions. He noted that his visit focused on strengthening cooperation across a range of areas that benefit citizens in both countries, including growth, trade, education, security and regional stability

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: UK Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Stephen Doughty, has concluded his first official visit to Pakistan since taking up his ministerial role, focusing on strengthening cooperation between the two countries in areas including economic growth, trade, education, regional security and migration. During his visit, Doughty met senior Pakistani political leaders to discuss ways to expand collaboration on shared priorities. Discussions covered economic growth, trade opportunities, regional stability, the situation in Afghanistan and counter-terrorism cooperation. The visit underscored the longstanding relationship between the United Kingdom and Pakistan and the importance both countries place on deepening bilateral ties. A key component of the visit focused on education. The minister met Pakistani and British education leaders to discuss the next phase of cooperation between universities in both countries. Talks explored opportunities to expand access to UK qualifications in Pakistan and strengthen partnerships in fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), healthcare and technology. The discussions highlighted the rapid growth of transnational education in Pakistan. More than 15,000 Pakistani students studied for UK qualifications in Pakistan through transnational education programmes during the 2024-25 academic year, representing an 83 percent increase over the past decade. Pakistan is now the fourth-largest host



country for UK transnational education globally, with British institutions accounting for around 65 percent of the country's transnational education market. Reflecting on the visit, Doughty said the UK and Pakistan share deep and historic ties built on connections between people, businesses and institutions. He noted that his visit focused on strengthening cooperation across a range of areas that benefit citizens in both countries, including growth, trade, education, security and regional stability. He also highlighted the significant potential for further collaboration in higher

education, pointing to the growing number of partnerships between British and Pakistani universities that help equip young people with skills for the future. The minister held meetings with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar. Discussions centered on trade and investment, regional security challenges, stability in Afghanistan, counter-terrorism cooperation and efforts to reduce the risk of escalation in the region. As part of his education-focused engagements,

Doughty participated in discussions with representatives of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission, university leaders and the British Council. The talks examined the future of transnational education and considered ways to deepen institutional links between universities in the UK and Pakistan. The British Council also announced plans to bring a delegation of UK universities to Pakistan next March to explore new opportunities for collaboration. The initiative aims to increase the number of partnerships and support a long-term goal of more than 100 British universities working with Pakistani institutions by the end of the decade. In addition to meetings with government officials, the minister met members of civil society and representatives from across Pakistan's political spectrum. During these engagements, he reaffirmed the UK's commitment to human rights and democratic freedoms while emphasizing the value of constructive dialogue and cooperation.

The visit highlighted the strong people-to-people ties that continue to underpin the UK-Pakistan relationship. Approximately 1.7 million people of Pakistani heritage live in the United Kingdom, creating deep cultural and social links between the two nations. Economic ties also remain significant, with annual trade between the UK and Pakistan valued at around £5.5 billion and continuing to grow. Doughty's visit reflects ongoing efforts by both countries to strengthen cooperation across a broad range of areas, from economic development and education to security and regional stability, reinforcing a partnership that remains important to both nations.

AI 'widening economic inequality', IMF chief warns

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The global AI boom is fast becoming the key driver of economies around the world but the boom is risking wider global inequality by leaving some nations behind, International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Kristalina Georgieva warned on Wednesday. She also lamented a lack of "decisive action" in heavily indebted advanced nations and called for "very tough policy choices" to restore the health of their public finances. Georgieva said in a speech ahead of the IMF's annual meetings in Singapore next week that AI investment-to-GDP will likely top the cash pumped into railroads, the electricity grid or the telecommunications network. Growth in AI-related trade was being seen most in the United States, China and India, where companies splashed out on data centres and other infrastructure, while others were benefitting from the manufacture of chips and robotics. "Love it, hate it, or fear it, AI is here, rapidly becoming a key driver of countries' relative fortunes in the world economy," Georgieva said. "Yet as this drives forward today's AI economies, it largely bypasses most others, increasing the risk of widening economic inequality across the globe," she warned. "Success requires everybody be taken along to harvest the transformative

power of AI, which is why it will be so important to deliver AI access around the globe. "And that, of course, calls for cooperation. In our interconnected world, countries cooperate not out of charity but out of self-interest." The speech comes amid growing concern about the vast sums pumped into the sector, and when investors will see returns, after the boom fuelled a market rally to record levels over the past two years. Tech firms continue to rise even after a summer rout, with chipmaker Nvidia hitting a record high on Tuesday to push its market capitalisation to almost \$5.7 trillion. "Should earnings fall short, however, hyperscaler leverage



and large and growing global holdings of US equities could turn a disappointment into a far-reaching shock," Georgieva said. She also addressed rising debt levels among governments, as borrowing costs fuelled by rising inflation and interest rates are compounded by massive bond issuance by companies to fund their AI investments. "Elevated yields are inflating the interest bill at a time of tight budget constraints and competing spending priorities, including defence," she said. "Higher policy rates then lift the short end, feeding directly into the cost of short-term debt. "And yet we don't see decisive action in high-debt advanced economies where the need of the hour is for credible medium-term fiscal consolidation plans, supported in some cases by upfront fiscal measures."

Vatican foreign minister arrives Pakistan today

Visit coincides with 75th anniversary of Pakistan-Holy See diplomatic relations

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark development in Pakistan-Holy See relations, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations for States and International Organisations of the Holy See, will undertake an official visit to Pakistan from October 8 to 10, 2026, at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. This will be the first-ever visit to Pakistan by a Secretary for Relations for States and International Organisations of the Holy See, marking a significant milestone in the diplomatic ties between the two states. The visit also coincides with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Holy See. During his three-day stay, Archbishop Gallagher will hold talks with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, focusing on matters of mutual interest, including interfaith harmony, dialogue and peace, as well as regional and international developments. The Archbishop is also expected to call on the Prime Minister of Pakistan during his visit. In addition to his official engagements, Archbishop Gallagher will interact with members of the Catholic community in Pakistan, underscoring the Holy See's pastoral outreach and its interest in the welfare of religious minorities in the country. - DNA

UAE slams attacks on Saudi Arabia

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: The UAE has strongly condemned the Houthis' continued targeting of civilians and civilian and economic facilities Saudi Arabia, as well as Saudi vessels in the southern Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. "This continued targeting constitutes a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and a threat to its security and stability," the UAE's foreign affairs ministry said in a statement, as it reaffirmed solidarity with the Kingdom and support for all measures to safeguard its security and stability. Saudi air defenses shot down a Houthi ballistic missile north of Riyadh, the coalition to support Yemen's sovereignty said early Wednesday. Separately, three people were hurt Monday night after airports in Najran and Jazan were targeted by the group. An earlier missile targeting Khamis Mushait was also stopped by Saudi forces.

WHO chief calls for transparency

NEWS DESK

GENEVA: The WHO said Wednesday it wanted more information from Russia on the death of a plague laboratory technician - and on reports of "a second employee with pneumonia of undetermined cause." The World Health Organization's chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said full transparency was needed in order to make a proper assessment of the public health risk. He reiterated that the WHO stood ready to help Moscow with technical support, if asked. "WHO has been actively following up on the reported death of a laboratory worker at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute," he said on X. "The individual died on October 2, 2026 after being hospitalized with severe pneumonia. Initial media reports suggested pneumonic plague following an alleged accidental laboratory exposure." On Saturday the WHO contacted the Russian authorities to get more information, under the International Health Regulations. The IHR provide a legally binding framework defining countries' rights and obligations in handling public health events and emergencies that could cross borders, and countries are asked to respond within 24 hours.

Islamabad ATC indicts Imaan Mazari, husband Hadi Chattha in 2024 security breach case

Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra frames charges against two lawyers in a case registered at Aabpara Police Station

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad on Wednesday indicted lawyer and human rights activist Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, in a security breach case registered at Aabpara Police Station. Imaan and Hadi appeared before the court via video link, where ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra framed charges against the two lawyers for allegedly creating a security risk by interfering in state affairs during the visit of an international cricket team in October 2024, despite objections from the defence. During the hearing, Chattha objected that he had not yet received copies of the case documents. "I have not even received the copies yet," he told the court, arguing that the charges could not be framed until all legal requirements had been fulfilled. Defence counsel Zainab Janjua argued that neither Mazari nor Chattha had received the required copies and that the lawyers had not been allowed to meet them. "The court cannot frame charges without fulfilling all legal requirements," Janjua said. During the hearing, Judge Sipra told the defence lawyer that they could challenge the decision. The court also ordered that Mazari and Chattha be produced in person at the next hearing. Subsequently, the court adjourned the hearing until October 9. The lawyer couple has been in custody since their arrest on January 23 in a case registered against them over a protest outside the Islamabad High Court. A day later, a sessions court sentenced them to 17 years on multiple charges under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) in a case related to controversial social media posts. On September 17, following months of proceedings, the Supreme Court suspended the couple's sentences in a case related to controversial tweets and granted them bail against surety bonds worth Rs200,000 each, until the final decision on the case pending before the Islamabad High Court. However, the relief was short-lived. Hours later, Islamabad police arrested the couple again in connection with another case and produced them before an anti-terrorism court (ATC). According to the FIR, Mazari and her husband were accused of chanting anti-government slogans and blocking roads during a protest. - APP

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